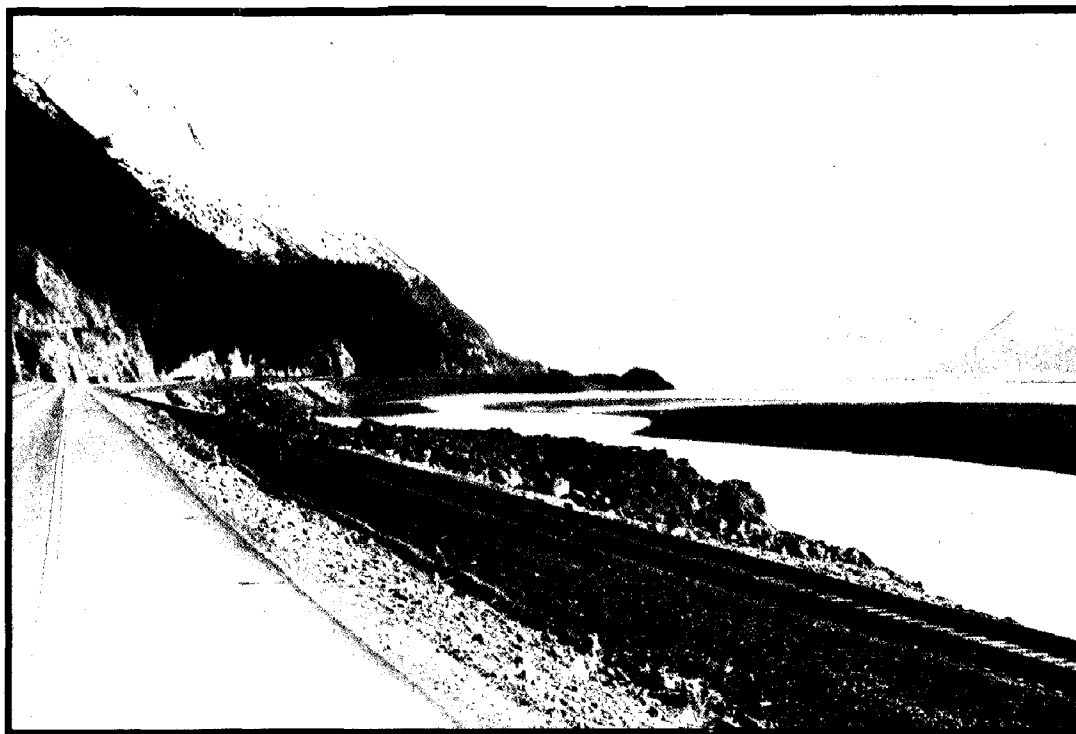


# Seward Highway Scenic Corridor Plan



QH  
76.5  
.A4  
S48  
1981

QH76.5.A4S48 1981

# Seward Highway Scenic Corridor Plan

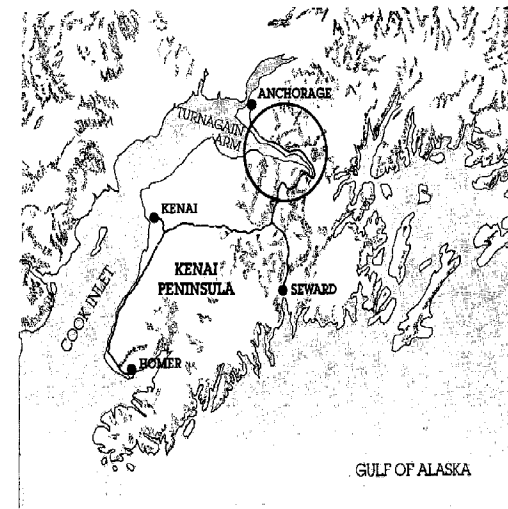
for the Municipality of Anchorage  
by Kramer, Chin & Mayo, Inc.

## Anchorage Coastal Management Plan

JULY, 1981



Alaska Coastal Management Program





The preparation of this report was financed in part through a Coastal Zone Management Program Grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce under the provisions of Section 306 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, and the Division of Community Planning, Department of Community and Regional Affairs of the State of Alaska.

## Table of Contents

	Page
BACKGROUND .....	3
Man's Use .....	5
THE NATURAL SETTING .....	11
VISUAL ASSESSMENT .....	15
MANAGEMENT PLAN .....	19
MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK .....	25
SITE SELECTIONS (Sections/Plans)	
Rabbit Creek Rifle Range .....	30
Potter Weigh Station .....	32
Johnson Trailhead at Rainbow .....	34
Bird Ridge Trailhead .....	36
Bird Creek Wayside .....	38
Bird Point .....	40
Avalanche Safe Area .....	42
Twenty Mile Boat Ramp .....	44
Typical Wayside .....	46
APPENDIX	
Inventory of Scenic and Recreational Sites .....	51
Model Scenic Corridor Legislation .....	53
Bibliography .....	55
MAPS	
Man's Use .....	4
Natural System .....	10
Visual Assessment .....	14
Environmental Synthesis .....	18

## Acknowledgments

*Project Leader:* Barry Quinn  
*Drawings:* Todd Swan, Bonnie Heitsch  
*Coordination:* Kristi Farley  
*Editor:* Sheryl Ball  
*Graphic Design:* Betty Hageman, Karen Pike

Background

# Background

The Seward Highway along Turnagain Arm has been proposed as a scenic corridor to be managed as a statewide resource. This 40-mile section of highway is one of Alaska's finest scenic and recreational areas. It is a primary attraction for visitors from around the world, and contributes significantly to the state's economy by offering a variety of unique opportunities to visiting guests. In 1979, 686,000 tourists spent \$179 million in Anchorage alone. Besides visitors from outside, many Alaskans use this section of the Seward Highway for both scenic and recreational purposes. The corridor not only contains an abundance of opportunities for a variety of users, but also provides access to the Kenai Peninsula, another primary recreational area.

As the population of Anchorage grows and as fuel prices increase, more people will be using scenic and recreational areas closer to home. The Turnagain Arm Corridor of the Seward Highway is one of those scenic and recreational areas. It is highly valued, generates jobs and revenues, and will only appreciate over time. The challenge is to protect and conserve the resources within the corridor and in doing so, maintain the value of this natural asset.

The scenic corridor is by no means a new concept; in fact, parkways, boulevards, avenues, and other scenic thoroughfares were planned and built, in Europe and America, long before the advent of the automobile. Over time, the federal government and a number of state governments have developed scenic highway programs which incorporated the scenic corridor into a national or state system. The National Park Service Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina, and the Natchez Trace Parkway in Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee are well known examples within the federal system.

Turnagain Arm is well known for its beauty and its abundant resources, and has long served as a major transportation route between the Pacific Ocean and interior Alaska. The arm has supported the progression of man from prehistoric times to the present; first Eskimos and Indian hunters, then Russian and European explorers arrived, followed by prospectors seeking gold.

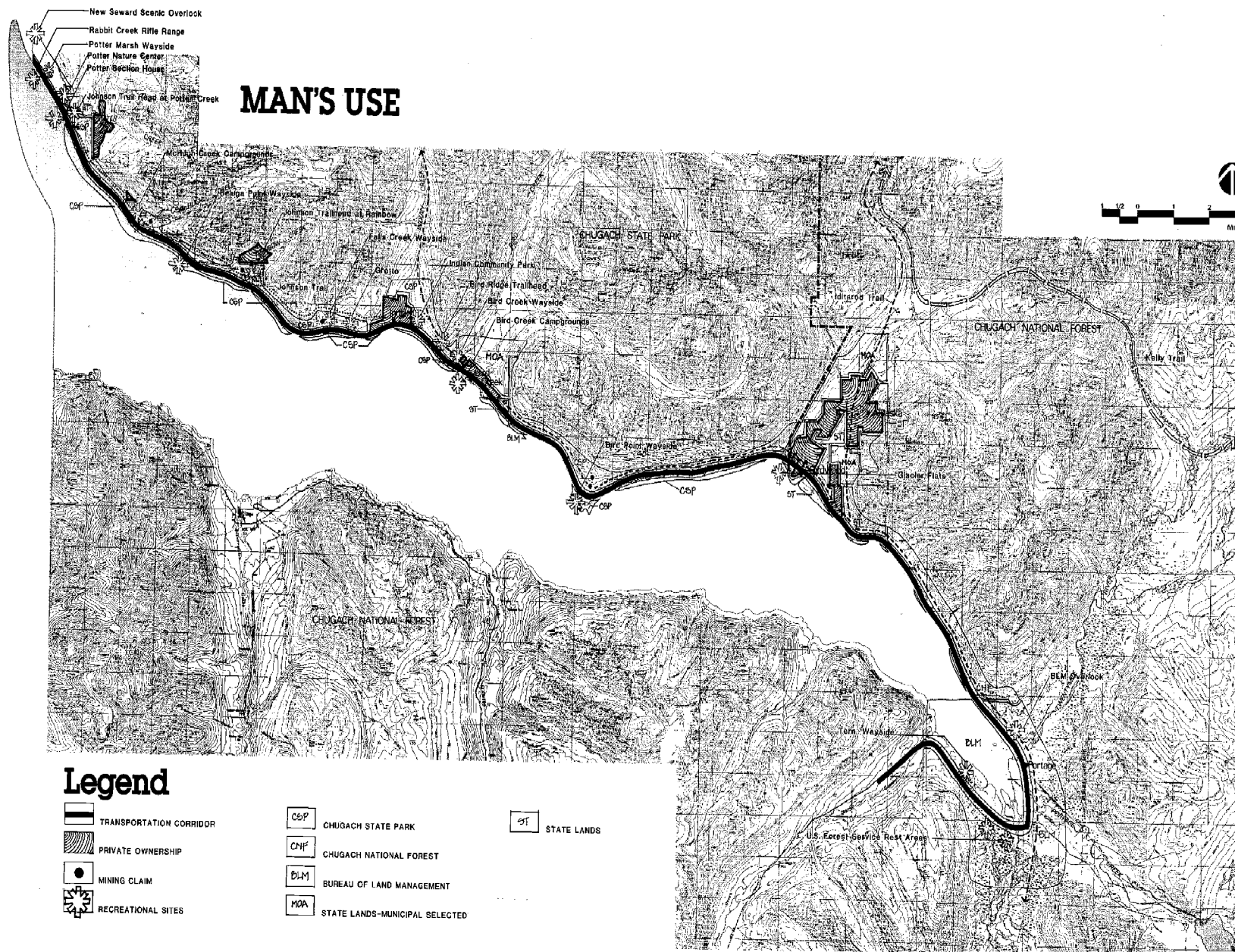
Turnagain Arm is rimmed by the majestic Chugach Mountains, rising some 7,000 feet out of the tidelands of Cook Inlet. The mountains are snow-covered in winter and lush green in summer. The coastal rain forest of the Pacific Northwest extends into the Cook Inlet Basin and provides a variety of interesting trees and ground cover on both the mountain slopes and in the river valleys. A number of creek and river valleys cut into the mountain range and add diversity to the landscape. The coastline is rugged, with rock outcroppings interspersed between the coastal marshes and river and creek bottoms. The intertidal areas are dominated by extreme tides that daily fill the arm and then ebb, leaving abstract delta formations in the mud bottom.

The highway, connecting Anchorage and communities beyond with the port of Seward and the Kenai Peninsula, follows the northern coast of Turnagain Arm. The Seward Highway was built in the late 1940s and is presently being widened and realigned. This provides an opportunity to inventory sites along the highway, as well as assessing the scenic and recreational potential. The various levels of governmental agencies have been prompted to take stock in the future of the highway corridor.

## The Seward Scenic Highway Corridor Plan

The Municipality of Anchorage District Coastal Management Program designates the Seward Highway from the coastal bluff above Potter Marsh to the Kenai Peninsula Borough as an "Area Meriting Special Attention." The designation is based on the natural values of the corridor, an expanded Seward Highway and future community development—and eliminating the potential conflicts between these concepts. In order to accommodate future development and highway expansion, yet protect the scenic and recreational resources, the municipality has proposed establishing the Seward Highway Scenic Corridor. The Seward Highway Scenic Corridor Plan follows three basic steps necessary to establish and manage a scenic corridor: it assesses the scenic and recreational potential along the corridor, outlines a framework for managing the corridor, and recommends sites for special consideration within the corridor. These three processes are discussed in detail in this report.

- **The Inventory:** This section includes data about Man's Use, the Natural Setting and the Visual Resources Assessment. Man's Use identifies and describes historic land and water use, land ownership, and the communities along the corridor. Existing and proposed scenic and recreational sites are located in the Appendix. The Natural Setting identifies fish and wildlife habitats and categorizes major landscape types. The Visual Resource Assessment evaluates and describes the scenic potential that exists along the corridor.
- **The Management Plan** section is composed of an Environmental Synthesis and a Management Framework. The Environmental Synthesis is a compilation of the information found in the inventory. It includes an analysis of scenic and recreation opportunities for each of the five sections of the corridor, and an outline of management objectives and recommendations. The Management Framework sets forth the basic concepts of a management plan and describes how to implement the scenic corridor concept.
- **The Sites** section of this report illustrates and describes the conceptual design of ten sites. The sites are either newly recommended scenic or recreational waysides, or existing waysides selected for special treatment. There is a Site Plan, Elevation and description for each recommended site.



# Man's Use

Man's activities in Turnagain Arm have been traced as far back as 6,000 B.C. (Antonson and Reger, 1976). An archaeological site at Beluga Point has turned up an 8,000-year-old prehistoric record from artifacts which may help explain the native migration into the region. It is suggested that Eskimos inhabited the upper Cook Inlet at least seasonally until 1700 A.D., when the Tanaina Indians crossed the Alaska Range and settled in the region (Sumond and Male, 1978). The Tanainians were observed in Turnagain Arm when Captain James Cook sailed into the area in 1778. During the next century numerous explorers visited the region including Russians, who settled in Alaska and remained until 1867.

The coastal areas of Turnagain Arm, as well as the river valley and mountain passes in the Chugach Range, have been used as travel routes into the interior of Alaska for many years. One of the first routes used to travel from Prince William Sound into Turnagain Arm was Portage Pass. This event was recorded in 1794, when Captain George Vancouver, while anchored in Cook Inlet, was visited by a group of Russians who had crossed Portage Pass from their settlement on Prince William Sound. In the years to come, Portage Pass, the Kelly Trail and the Iditarod Trail (with its Indian Creek and Crow Creek branches) were all used to travel further and further into the interior. The following are brief descriptions of these routes.

## Early Routes

*Portage Pass:* A foot and sled trail that ran between Passage Canal (Whittier) and Turnagain Arm. The trail was used early on by Eskimos and Indians, and later by Russian settlers and explorers during the 18th and 19th centuries.

*The Kelly Trail:* In 1897, Luther S. Kelly, an army guide, was ordered to find a summer route between Passage Canal (Whittier) and Cook Inlet. The route he established followed Billings Creek to Lake Carmen, crossing the pass at the head of Twenty Mile River and descended to Glacier Creek Valley. The route was rugged and never established as a permanent trail.

*Iditarod Trail:* The Iditarod Trail, named after an interior mining town, was actually a series of trails that developed in increments as the need arose to push further into Alaska. The trail ran between Seward and Nome and is well-known today as a mining trail used during the gold rush of 1910. A traveler could get to Anchorage by leaving the Iditarod and traveling along Turnagain Arm or by crossing the passes of the Chugach into the Ship Creek or Eagle River drainages. Iditarod traversed the mountains through the Crow Creek and Indian Creek Valleys.

*Crow Creek Branch:* The Crow Creek Branch was opened by early prospectors about 1896, and by 1900 the trail was used regularly as a mail route to Knik. The trail followed Crow Creek to Crow Pass and then descended Raven Creek into Eagle River and on to Knik.

*Indian Creek Branch:* This branch of the Iditarod followed Turnagain Arm past Bird Creek to Indian Creek Valley, and crossed the Chugach at Indian Creek Pass into the headwaters of Ship Creek. By 1909, roadhouses and mileage points began to appear along the Iditarod, including one at Indian Pass.

## The Railroad

Railroad history in Alaska began in 1901 with the creation of the Alaska Central Railroad by John E. Ballaine, a Seattle newspaper and real estate man. A route between Seward and Ship Creek was selected and construction began in 1905. Six years after its creation, the railroad was bankrupt. The Alaska Northern Railroad was reorganized in 1909 and extended to Kern before construction once again ceased.

In 1913, after two railroad companies had failed, Congress authorized President Woodrow Wilson to create and operate the Alaska railroad. The Alaska Northern Railroad was purchased for \$1.2 million by the Alaska Engineering Commission and was destined to tie Anchorage and Fairbanks to the tidewater ports of Seward and Whittier.

*Johnson Trail:* Once the Alaska Northern Railroad had been purchased, the Alaska Engineering Commission began improving the route between Kern and Ship Creek town (Anchorage). By 1916 a horse trail had been cleared and improved between Indian and Potter. This route became the main trail during the 1916-1918 construction period and linked the construction camps at Potter, Sheep Creek (McHugh Creek), Rainbow, Falls Creek and Bird Point. This route was also used for telegraph communication lines. Today the Johnson Trail is partially intact, though covered in some places by the highway, and is scheduled for rehabilitation and partial relocation as a part of the Seward Highway Improvement Project.

Construction camps, built along the Johnson Trail, were used during the building of the railroad and abandoned shortly thereafter. The following are the major construction camps along the route.

*Potter:* In 1916 Potter was established as headquarters for the district engineer. Residences, warehouses, a messhall and a number of log buildings formed this temporary community. The camp was supplied by barges and linked to the other camps by the Johnson Trail. Once the rails had been laid to Falls Creek, Potter was abandoned, and headquarters were re-established at the end of the section.

*Sheep Creek (McHugh Creek):* A small camp and field hospital were built at what is now the parking area of McHugh Creek picnic area. The camp and hospital were operated between 1916 and 1918.

*Rainbow:* A supply warehouse, a dock and numerous log buildings were built on a knoll overlooking the cove at Rainbow. The Alaska Engineering Commission began using Rainbow for its headquarters in August of 1918.

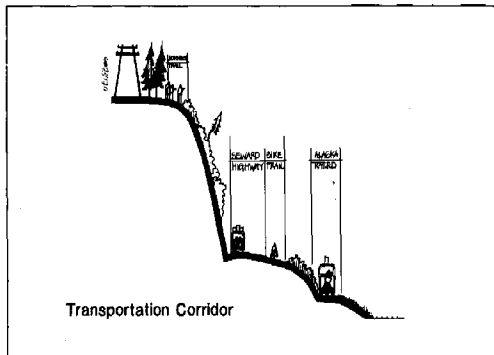
*Falls Creek:* The district engineer was headquartered at Falls Creek between December 1917 and August 1918. Horse teams were stabled at this site and were used to move construction supplies along the Johnson Trail.

**Bird Point:** In 1914 a roadhouse, workhouse and two cabins formed an overnight stop at the eastern end of the point. A sawmill was added in 1917 to supply the material to build the causeway leading north around the arm. A construction camp, built about the same time, included a section house (which was operated until the 1900s), several log buildings and tent frames.

In addition to the temporary communities and construction camps that grew up along the Johnson Trail, there were also other historic communities related to the railroad.

**Kern:** When the Alaska Northern Railroad went bankrupt in 1909, its tracks had been laid to Kern Creek. Kern remained the end of the Seward section until the northern line from Anchorage was joined in 1918. At that time there was a roadhouse and a number of out-buildings clustered near the creek located some 68 miles from the beginning of the line in Seward.

**Portage:** Portage was the main stop on the Iditarod and had been a part of the old Portage Pass route used by natives and foreign explorers alike. There was a roadhouse, a section house, and several out-buildings that have since been destroyed. The buildings that can presently be seen settling into the mudflats were all built after 1947, and were destroyed during the 1964 earthquake.



## Highway and Utilities Corridors

Today the Iditarod and Johnson trails have been replaced by the Seward Highway. The highway was built in 1947 connecting Potter and Girdwood and tying Anchorage to the

Kenai Peninsula. Roads also serve Girdwood along Glacier Valley and Portage Glacier Visitor Center along Portage Creek. The old corduroy road at the arm end is now a well-paved highway that follows the old Iditarod route into Seward, Sunshine and Hope.

The Seward Highway between Potter and McHugh Creek was recently widened and realigned and now includes a bike pathway along the shoulder of the road. This next phase of the Seward Highway Improvement, Phase III, is scheduled to begin this year and will include a bike trail along the shoulder from McHugh Creek to Indian Creek where it will join an Indian/Bird Creek community bike trail also to be constructed as part of the highway improvement project. Eventually, the bike trail will extend from Anchorage to Girdwood as proposed in the Municipality of Anchorage's Bike Trail System.

The telegraph lines along the old Johnson Trail have also been replaced by electrical power lines serving Turnagain Arm, Whittier and the Kenai Peninsula. An old military fuel line that supplies the Alaskan military bases with petroleum products shipped into Whittier parallels the highway, railroad and power lines.

The highway, railroad and utility right-of-way often overlap. The right-of-ways extend from Potter to Portage where the highway splits and follows the arm into Turnagain Pass. The railroad and power line follow Placer River through Johnson Pass.

## Communities

**Rainbow Valley:** A small, community-planned subdivision of approximately 160 acres. Due to steep slopes, avalanche hazards, and restricted access, residents have limited the community to 30 homes on (minimum) 5-acre sites. The present population is approximately 25, which is expected to increase to 68 in 20 years.

**Indian:** A lone roadhouse once stood where the community of Indian is located today. It marked the beginning of the Indian Creek branch of the Iditarod Trail and sheltered many travelers heading north to "gold country." Today Indian is a small community of about 100 people, which is expected to double in population in 20 years. There are approximately 16 developable acres in the Creek Valley, which is mostly privately owned. Residents seem to have settled on 5-acre lots

in steep sloping areas and 2 1/2-acre sites elsewhere, due to insufficient water and marginal soil. Presently, commercial activity is limited to the Seward Highway Corridor. The Municipality of Anchorage has selected a tract of state land, adjacent to both the road and residential area, which it plans to keep undeveloped due to wetlands, flood plain and avalanche hazards. Indian also has a community park and is the trailhead for the Indian to Arctic Valley Trail.

**Bird Creek:** In 1915 Bird Creek was the site of major sawmill and lumber companies that supplied material to Anchorage and the Alaska railroad. Roadhouses were located in the vicinity of Bird Creek and at Bird Point prior to 1909. There are approximately 140 people living at Bird Creek today, and they expect an increase to 340 in 20 years. There are about 100 acres located along the highway that are available for development. East of the community is a large tract of state land, selected by the municipality, that is intended for use as a major regional park. The State Division of Parks operates the Bird Creek campgrounds and a wayside for fishing adjacent to the bridge at Bird Creek. Commercial activity is now limited to the Seward Highway.

**Girdwood/Alyeska:** Girdwood was named after James E. Girdwood, a Belgian immigrant, who in 1896 explored the Crow Creek area and later formed the Crow Creek Alaska Hydraulic Gold Mining Company. Girdwood, with its log residences and roadhouse, was a true frontier settlement and was even chosen as a set for the "Cheechakos," a silent, frontier saga produced in 1923.

Girdwood, today, is a growing community in one of Alaska's most popular resort/recreational areas. The developed areas are in the Glacier and the Crow Creek valleys, surrounded by the Chugach National Forest. Alyeska, a fine ski resort, is located on the western slopes of Mount Alyeska. There are about 1,000 permanent residents and 1,600 seasonal residents in the area. There are approximately 2,000 acres of suitable land for development in the valley. The population is expected to increase to 2,000 permanent residents and 6,000 seasonal residents over the next 20 years. Presently, there is a school and a sewer system being built for the community. There are stores, a lodge, restaurants, a library, a community building, and a fire hall located in the valley.



## Ownership and Land Management

**Federal Land:** The U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service all manage federally owned land along the Seward Highway Scenic Corridor. The Chugach National Forest is the largest parcel of federal land in the region. The Bureau of Land Management has jurisdiction for the townsite of Portage, which extends into the valleys of Placer and Twenty Mile River and Portage Creek. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has joint management responsibility for the coastal marsh and wetlands areas in the valleys at the head of Turnagain Arm. The joint management agreement also includes the U.S. Forest Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the Department of Natural Resources. The Alaska railroad also owns and manages a 200-foot right-of-way between Potter and Portage.

**State Land:** The State of Alaska owns and manages the largest amount of land along the road corridor. Chugach State Park, extending from Potter to Girdwood, is actively managed by the Division of Parks, Department of Natural Resources. The Department of Fish and Game manages the Potter Marsh Wildlife Refuge, a staging and nesting area for migratory waterfowl. Within the wildlife refuge, the department also manages the Rabbit Creek Rifle Range, one of the few shooting ranges in the Anchorage area. The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities manages and maintains the Seward Highway right-of-way, which is approximately 300 feet wide. ADOT/PF is also responsible for a material site in the old Girdwood area. The Department of Public Safety manages the Potter weigh station, adjacent to Potter Marsh.

**Municipality of Anchorage:** The municipality owns approximately 2,500 acres along Turnagain Arm. In addition, substantial amounts of state land have been selected in Indian Valley, Bird Valley, and the Girdwood area. The municipally-selected land is intended for both park land and for conversion to private ownership.

**Private Ownership:** Private land along the Seward Highway is limited to Potter, Rainbow Valley, Indian, Bird Creek and Girdwood/Alyeska. Only 7 percent of the land in the corridor is privately owned, while 93 percent is owned by federal, state or local government. Homesteads and recreational sites were the first lands in private ownership and more recently, these large parcels have been subdivided and sold.

Most of the private land is used for residential development, though both commercial and residential development can be found scattered along the arm. Mining claims can also be found along the corridor. A list of 21 of Seward Highway's scenic and recreational sites can be found in the Appendix of this document. The management responsibility for each site is given, as well as location, function, facilities and status.

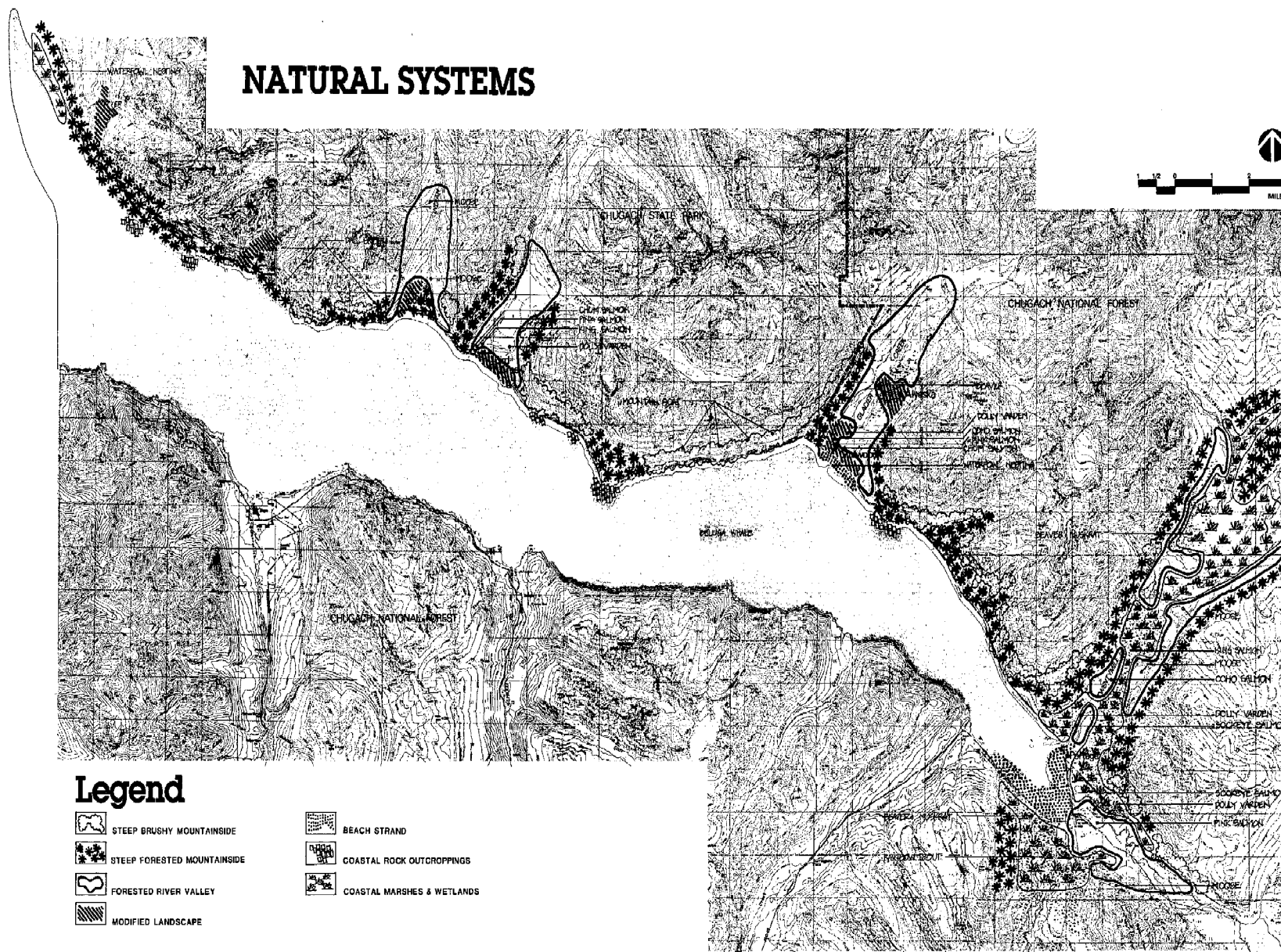


*View of Potter Creek from North*  
(Courtesy: Alaska Railroad Collection, Anchorage Historical and Fine Arts Museum)



# The Natural Setting

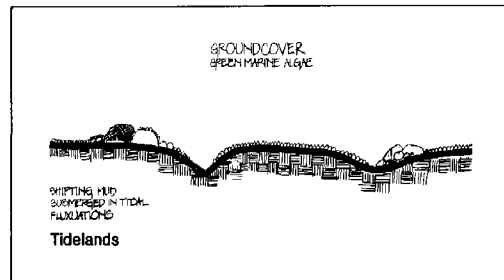
## NATURAL SYSTEMS



# The Natural Setting

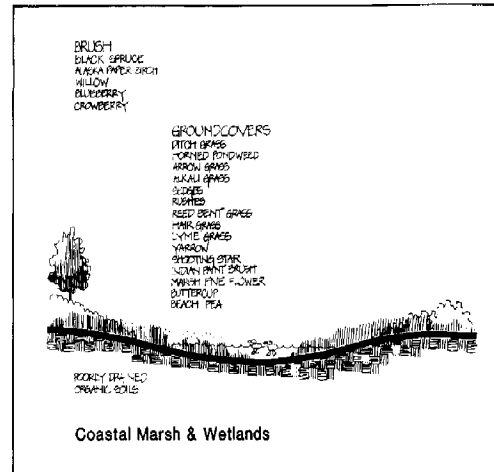
Turnagain Arm offers one of the most unique and dynamic natural settings in Alaska. The arm is surrounded by the rugged Chugach range, with elevations in excess of 7,000 feet. With the exception of the glacial river valley at the eastern end of the arm, the predominant landforms are steep mountain slopes and creek valleys that drop into the tidal waters. Silts from the glacially-fed streams have been deposited in the arm, causing a delta formation in the tidelands commonly referred to as "the mudflats." The arm, 43 miles long and 3 miles wide, is an estuary where high tides mix with glacially-fed creeks and rivers. Tides in the arm are some of the highest in the world and periodically create ten-foot tidal bores and 15-mile-an-hour currents.

The natural setting is a key element in determining the scenic quality and recreational potential of any area. For the purpose of this inventory, the natural setting is divided into eight landscape types. Landscape types are based on predominant landforms, types of vegetation, water forms and wildlife habitat.



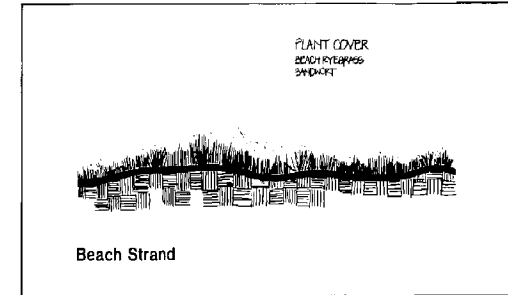
1. *Tidelands.* The tidelands are the lower portions of the intertidal area (between low and high tide) where fresh and salt water mix, and where stream and river currents carve their way through the glacial silt-formed deltas. At high tide the area is submerged, and at low tide the abstract patterns of channeled mudflats are exposed.

In the summer, salmon and smelt use the intertidal areas to travel into the spawning beds in the upper reaches of the coastal rivers and creeks. Beluga whales and seals follow the migrations and remain in the areas while their food source is plentiful. Numerous shorebirds and waterfowl use the tidelands for staging areas on their northern and southern migration.

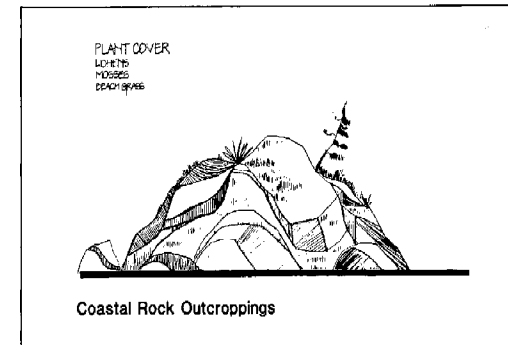


2. *Coastal Marshes and Wetlands.* The upper portions of the intertidal areas are primarily the marshes and wetlands. These landscape types are formed by tidal intrusion into the outwash areas of rivers and streams and by the slow succession of plant life in the fresh water deltas.

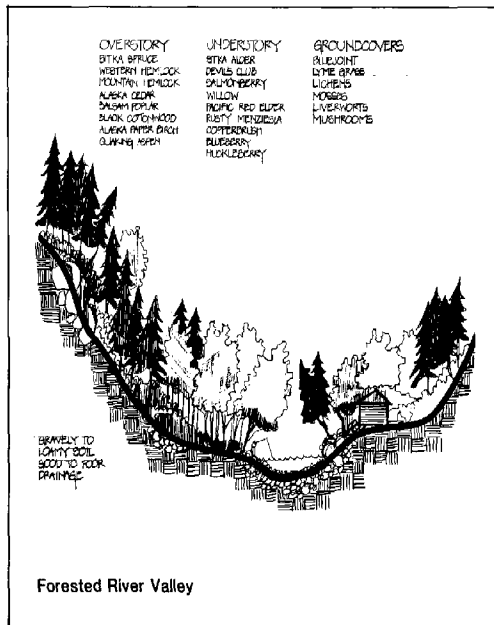
These areas are characterized by the grasses, rushes and sedges and by the abundance of birds and wildlife. Wetlands and marshes are the most important habitat for shorebirds, ducks, geese, swans and cranes, supporting their seasonal migration and providing nesting areas during the spring and summer months. In addition, these areas provide year-round habitat for smaller animals, protection and food sources for fish, and offer a variety of plants and wildflowers for the interested observer.



3. *Beach Strand.* This landscape type is the landform closest to the intertidal zone. It is, typically, an early stage in beach succession and is characterized by beach ryegrass and sandwort growing in sandy silt and soil above the tidal zone. The beach strand in Turnagain Arm was formed by seismic activity, not by beach succession—causing the tidelands to be uplifted above the tidal zone. This action dewatered the soils and initiated new plant colonization. Vegetation is well established in these areas, and birds use the strand for both staging and nesting.

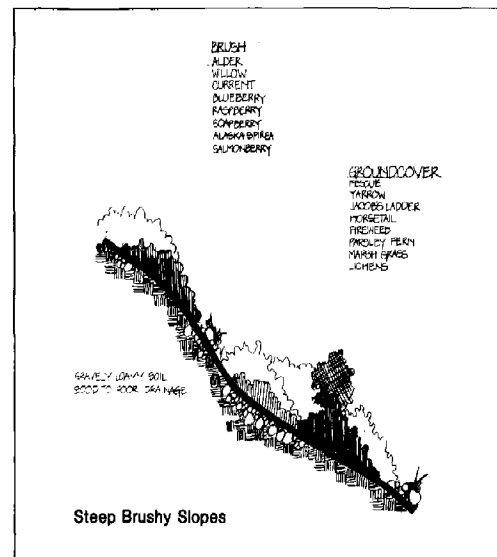


4. *Coastal Rock Outcropping.* There are rock outcroppings found along Turnagain Arm where steep mountain slopes drop into the coastal waters. At these points wind and water erosion have removed or inhibited vegetation, and the bedrock is exposed to the weathering process.



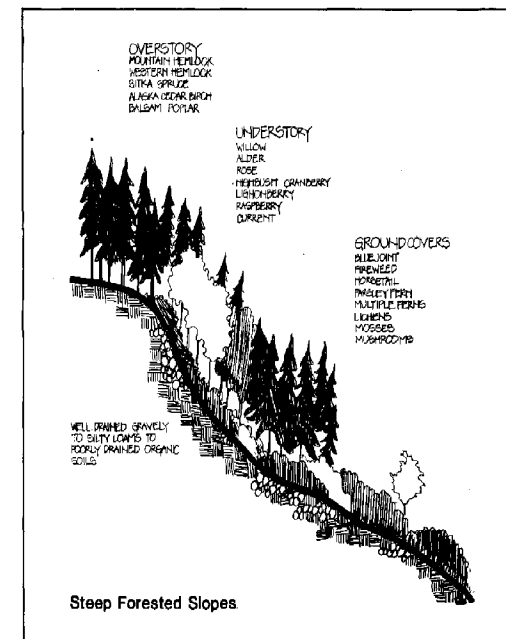
5. *Forested River Valley*. The forested river valleys are the primary upland areas along Turnagain Arm. These areas are part of a coastal forest system—an extension of the rainbelt forests of the Pacific Coast—and are composed primarily of Sitka spruce and western hemlock. Mountain hemlock, poplar, cottonwood and birch are also present in these valleys.

Forested river valleys provide good habitat for moose, black bear, and occasionally brown bear in the summer. A variety of smaller animals and birds can be found throughout the forests. The rivers flowing through these valleys support resident populations of rainbow trout, Dolly Varden and spawning salmon and Hooligan in the summer.



6. *Steep Brushy Mountainsides*. These areas are characterized by dense, open deciduous brush on steep mountain slopes. The brush ranges from dense willows along streams to dense alders above timberline. Brushy areas occur between treeline and alpine tundra, and along both floodplains and avalanche paths.

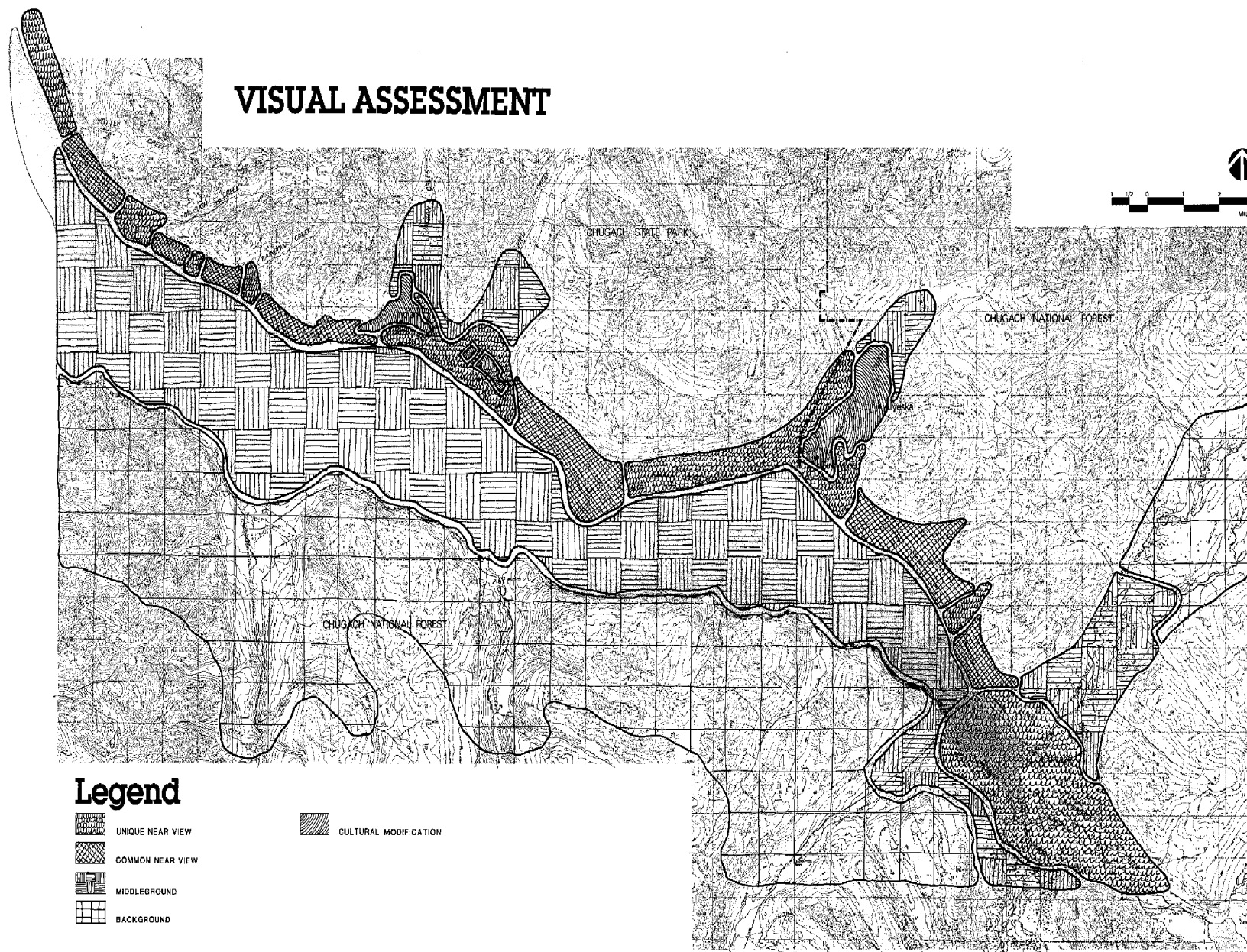
Steep brushy mountainsides provide excellent habitat for mountain goats and Dall Sheep, as well as smaller animals and birds. Dall Sheep prefer relatively dry alpine areas associated with steep cliffs and grassy meadows which provide grasses, lichens and sedges for food sources. Mountain goats prefer rocky alpine areas in the summer and timberline in the winter. Their diet consists primarily of grasses and herbs.



7. *Steep Forested Mountainsides*. The forested mountainside is similar to the forested valley, with the exception of slope and elevation. Forested mountainsides contain mountain hemlock and Sitka spruce, with interspersed low-to-moderately dense brush.
8. *Cultural Modification*. Cultural modification describes landscape types that have been changed by man. Any one of the seven natural landscape types can be changed or modified. The modifications range from cabin sites on brush mountainsides to communities (and the necessary roads and powerlines) such as Indian and Bird Creek found in forested valleys.

Visual Assessment

## VISUAL ASSESSMENT



# Visual Assessment

In Turnagain Arm, landform, water and vegetation combine to create some of the finest scenery in Alaska. The task of determining the visual resources of any area is complex, but in an area such as Turnagain Arm, where grandeur and beauty predominate, the task becomes a challenge of distinguishing between the most spectacular views.

The purpose of a visual resource inventory is to identify and understand the scenic resources, to determine their value, and to serve as a basis for a management program that protects, conserves and enhances the resources, or that mitigates negative impacts upon the resources. The following is a description of the methodology that is used to inventory the visual resources along the Seward Highway Scenic Corridor. This methodology was adapted from a combination of approaches, but most resembles the U.S. Forest Service National Forest Landscape Management Technique, 1974, and the Bureau of Land Management System for Visual Resource Management, 1975.

To identify and describe the visual resources in Turnagain Arm, these steps were followed:

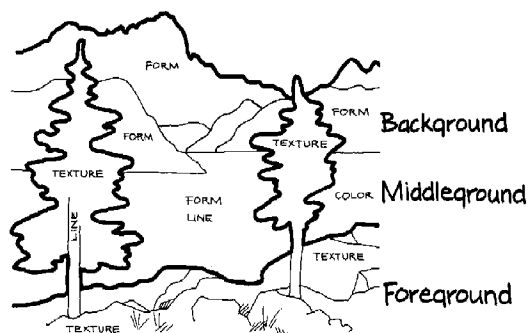
1. Evaluate the scenic quality.
2. Determine the visual sensitivity.
3. Identify distance zones.

## Scenic Quality

The natural diversity of a landscape provides the greatest potential for high scenic quality. Diversity is a function of the relationship between landform, water and vegetation that creates visual patterns, which are composed of:

- **Form:** the shape of an object
- **Line:** horizons, silhouettes, man-made development
- **Color:** hue (red, green) and value (light, dark)
- **Texture:** coarseness of visual surface

To determine scenic quality, an area or landform such as a mountain range is selected and rated for diversity according to both landscape components (landform, water and vegetation) and visual patterns (form, line, color and texture). Also taken into consideration in the rating are the influences of adjacent scenery, scarcity and cultural modifications. The



following categories are used to describe the range of scenic quality evident on Turnagain Arm.

- **Unique:** Areas where a variety of landforms, vegetative patterns and water create an unusual or outstanding scenic quality.
- **Common:** Areas whose features contain a variety of form, line, color and texture, but which tend to form a common visual pattern throughout.
- **Minimal:** Areas whose features have little change in form, line, color and texture.

As illustrated on the visual inventory map, there is both unique and common scenic quality along Turnagain Arm. No areas reflect the minimal category.

## Visual Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity refers to a relative degree of user interest in the visual resources. The users in Turnagain Arm are the highway user, the recreational user and the local residents. The process of determining visual sensitivity involves sampling the user attitudes and evaluating the volume of use.

Due to budget and time restrictions, an in-depth survey sampling user attitudes was not possible. But discussions with local residents, highway and recreational users and government agencies did generate the following impressions:

- Weekday use of the scenic corridor is relatively constant and limited to commuting local residents and occasional tourists and recreational users.
- Weekend use of the corridor increases in the warmer months and is made up of both tourists and recreational users.
- Tourists or sightseers use the scenic corridor more than recreational users.
- Weekend use of the highway involves a significant number of both tourists or sightseers and recreational users destined for areas beyond Turnagain Arm.

The type of user, the user volume, and the apparent attitude of the tourist, recreational user and local resident has led to the conclusion that there is a high level of visual sensitivity and a significant concern for changes in the visual character of the area.

## Distance Zones

"Near," "middle" and "distant" describe three zones that characterize distance relationships.

**Near:** The foreground, extending zero to one-half mile from the view, is an area that can be seen with clarity and simplicity, and provides impressions of details (color intensity, texture).

**Middle:** The middle ground extends from one-half to five miles. In the middle ground parts of the landscape can be seen to join together (mountains become ranges, trees become forests). Man-made changes are revealed as conflicts with the landscape or blending comfortably into the scenery.

**Distant:** The background zone extends from five miles to infinity. Landform surfaces will lose detail distinctions and emphasis will fall upon outlines or edges. Landform against landform will provide line and values, with the skyline the strongest line of all.





# Management Plan



# Management Plan

The inventory of the scenic, natural and man-made resources allows for the careful examination of each part of the complex system along the Seward Highway Scenic Corridor. Once the components have been thoroughly examined, they are again combined in a synthesis to form a more accurate picture of the complex whole. The intent of the synthesis is to consider scenic and recreational opportunities along the corridor, identify management objectives, and make specific management recommendations.

The Seward Highway Scenic Corridor, for the purpose of this plan, has been divided into five sections. Each section is defined by common characteristics and all sections, though similar, are different from one another. The following is a short description of each section.

*Section 1:* This section extends from the intersection of the old Seward and new Seward highways, (mile 0), to Potter Creek, (mile 3.0). The three-mile section of road bisects the Potter Marsh Wildlife Refuge and contains a concentration of proposed recreational facilities.

*Section 2:* From Potter Creek, Section 2 extends beyond the McHugh Creek Wayside to mile 7.4. This section coincides with the recently completed Phase II of the Seward Highway Improvement Project.

*Section 3:* Section 3 extends from McHugh Creek to Avalanche Gate at mile 20.5. Section 3 coincides with Phase III of the Seward Highway Improvement Project, scheduled to begin in the fall of 1981, and includes the communities of Rainbow Valley, Indian and Bird Creek.

*Section 4:* Section 4 extends along the avalanche slopes of the Chugach Range to the intersection of the Alyeska Road at mile 27.9. This section generally coincides with Phase IV of the Seward Highway Improvement Project.

*Section 5:* Section 5 extends to the limits of the Municipality of Anchorage at Ingram Creek, mile 40.2. This section includes the valleys along Twenty Mile, Placer River and Portage Creek.

## Section 1, Old Seward Highway to Potter Creek

The Seward Highway enters the scenic corridor on the coastal bluff overlooking Potter Marsh. The highway immediately descends into the wetlands of the Potter Point State Game Refuge and continues on level terrain to the end of the section at Potter Creek. The highway shares a right-of-way with the Alaska Railroad and due to the elevated tracks, highway views of Turnagain Arm are somewhat obstructed. The coastal wetlands are the major landscape type, and the Chugach Range beyond offers mainly steep, forested mountainside.

*Scenic Potential:* The scenic resources in this section are primarily the summer near view of Potter Marsh and the year-round distant views from the coastal bluff and the Potter Section House. In summer, the wetlands provide intense color, contrast and bird activity. In winter, the marsh loses its color and becomes dormant. Distant views from the bluff are of Turnagain Arm with the Chugach Range as a backdrop, the coastal wetlands at Potter and the tidelands along the coast.

*Recreational Potential:* There is a wide variety of recreation opportunities within this section of the corridor. The recreational sites are primarily concentrated at the beginning and at the end of this section. The municipality's proposed coastal trail, running 25 miles from Ship Creek, enters the corridor below the proposed new Seward overlook. Once joining the scenic corridor, the bike route continues along the highway shoulder as far south as Girdwood. The Rabbit Creek Rifle Range is also located below the coastal bluff. It is one of the few facilities of this kind in the municipality and serves a large number of enthusiasts.

At the end of this section there are additional proposed recreational sites: the Potter Nature Center, the Potter Section House and the Johnson Trailhead at Potter Creek are all intended to provide both active and passive recreational opportunities.

*Management Considerations:* This section of the Seward Highway offers a variety of opportunities. Its most attractive feature is the predominant landscape type, the coastal wetlands. Proximity to Anchorage and a number of scenic and recreational opportunities makes this section a potential high use area,

### SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL SITES

Mile	Site	Type
0.3	New Seward Highway Scenic Overlook	Scenic
0.5	Rabbit Creek Rifle Range	Recreational
0.6	Potter Marsh Wayside	Scenic
1.0	Potter Marsh Wayside	Scenic
1.5	Potter Marsh Wayside	Scenic
2.6	Potter Marsh Nature Center	Scenic/Recreational
2.9	Potter Section House	Scenic/Recreational
3.0	Johnson Trailhead at Potter	Recreational

and at the same time, the Potter Point State Game Refuge remains a sensitive waterfowl habitat. Four existing scenic and recreational sites are scheduled for improvements to increase user capacity, and four new sites are proposed which will attract additional users.

*Objective:* Section 1 should be planned and developed in such a way as to protect and enhance the inherent natural values along the corridor, while taking advantage of the scenic and recreational opportunities.

#### Recommendations:

1. Designate Section 1 as a "sensitive area" within the scenic corridor; identify the levels of government and the agencies responsible for the area, and form an inter-agency planning team.
2. The inter-agency planning team should develop a cooperative management plan that guides public and private development, while protecting the natural scenic and recreational values along the scenic corridor.

3. Minimize conflicting and incompatible uses along the corridor.
  - a. Design the Rabbit Creek Rifle Range improvements to be compatible with the game refuge, and the proposed new Seward Highway scenic overlook.
  - b. Relocate the Potter weigh station to allow for the proposed Potter Nature Center.
4. Stabilize and revegetate the following areas:
  - a. Cut and fill slopes
  - b. Highway shoulders
  - c. Elevated slopes forming the railroad bed
  - d. Erosion areas

## Section 2, Potter to McHugh Creek

Once past Potter Creek, the scenic corridor winds south-east along Turnagain Arm. The highway overlooks the tidelands and above are the steep forested slopes of the Chugach Mountains. The landscape generally remains constant, with only slight variations occurring on the land side. The coastline is rocky with scattered rock outcroppings. This three and one-half mile section of road, recently widened and realigned, parallels the Alaska Railroad.

**Scenic Potential:** The scenic potential in Section 2 is related to the unique distant views of the Chugach Mountains on the south side of Turnagain Arm. The near views are interesting steep mountain slopes, but lack diversity until the end of the section where the corridor enters the McHugh Creek Valley.

There are a number of modifications from the highway improvement project that have created visual distractions along this section. An inventory of waste material sites and old road sections identified ten locations prime for rehabilitation and enhancement. Presently these sites are used for scenic viewing, but not even the most basic facilities are provided.

**Recreational Potential:** With the exception of McHugh Creek picnic area, the recreational potential is limited to beach walking. McHugh Creek picnic area provides access to both the Johnson Trail and McHugh Creek Trail. It offers a rest and picnic area close to Anchorage and is heavily used during the warmer months. Views of the arm, at higher elevations than normally found at roadside, are also available from the public area.

### SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL SITE

Mile	Site	Type
6.4	McHugh Creek picnic area	Recreational

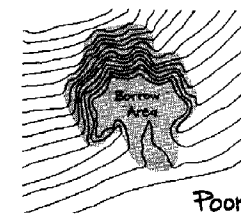
**Management Considerations:** Scenic opportunities in Section 2 are limited by common near views, and recreational opportunity is limited to the McHugh Creek area. The Seward Highway improvement project has left a number of visual distractions that would be mitigated by rehabilitation, including wayside development.

**Objective:** Rehabilitate and enhance the scenic corridor in Section 2, while maximizing the limited scenic and recreation opportunities.

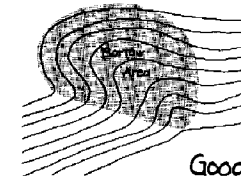
#### Recommendations:

1. Relocate the weigh station to the old road section at mile 3.3. This site is close to Anchorage and will easily accommodate the requirements of a weigh station.
2. Select and design scenic waysides from the waste material sites and old road sections, at intervals of approximately one mile.
3. Rehabilitate the waste sites and old road sections not selected for waysides.
4. Reshape borrow pits and construction roads according to natural topography.
5. Enhance the entrance to the McHugh Creek picnic area by arranging existing rocks and adjusting the drainage pattern.
6. Stabilize and revegetate the following areas:
  - a. Waste material sites
  - b. Old road sections
  - c. Cut and fill slopes
  - d. Road shoulders
  - e. Borrow pits
  - f. Erosion areas

### Borrow Area Treatment

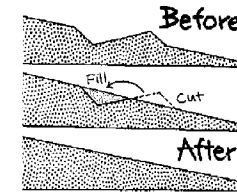


Poor

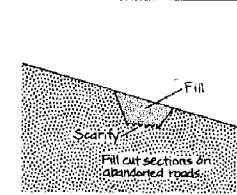


Good

### Abandoned Road Treatment



Before



After

## Section 3, McHugh Creek to Avalanche Gate

The scenic corridor winds its way east from McHugh Creek along Turnagain Arm to the Avalanche Gate. Along this 13-mile corridor are a variety of scenic and recreational opportunities that make this section the most popular of all. The landscape varies from forested river valleys at Indian and Bird Creek to steep brush mountains around Falls Creek. There are moose and bear found in the river valleys, and sheep and goats found along the steep slopes. This section contains three of the four communities found along Turnagain Arm. The Seward Highway in this section is scheduled for widening and realignment beginning in the fall of 1981, which will improve the safety of the highway and at the same time increase scenic and recreational sites along the corridor.

**Scenic Potential:** Unique, near views are found at Beluga Point, Rainbow and along the Indian-to-Bird Creek portions of the corridor. The common, near views lack landscape diversity, but are still important resources, due to potential sheep and goat viewing. Unique, middle views exist from the corridor to the tidelands and into the steep forested mountainsides of Indian and Bird Creek valleys. Middle views of the uplands along the corridor are rare and dependent upon creek and river valleys cutting through the Chugach Mountains.

*Recreational Potential:* Existing recreational use in this section of the corridor is the highest found at the arm, and with the proposed improvements to the Seward Highway, the opportunities will increase significantly. The coastline, Johnson Trail, the Indian branch of the old Iditarod Trail and the Bird Ridge Trail provide walking and hiking enthusiasts with ample opportunities. Presently, there is camping at Bird Creek, which will be increased when the Bird Creek Regional Park is developed. There are also existing or proposed waysides at Beluga Point, Rainbow, Windy Corner, Falls Creek and Bird Ridge. The communities of Indian and Bird Creek enjoy a park adjacent to Indian Creek that was constructed by local residents.

SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL SITES		
Mile	Site	Type
8.0	Beluga Point	Scenic
9.9	Johnson Trailhead at Rainbow	Recreational
11.3	Windy Corner	Scenic
12.6	Falls Corner	Scenic
13.2	The Grotto	Scenic
15.2	Indian Community Park	Recreational
16.0	Bird Ridge Wayside	Recreational
16.7	Bird Creek Wayside	Recreational
16.9	Bird Creek Campground	Recreational

In addition to major scenic sites, there are 15 scenic waysides planned for this section.

*Management Considerations:* There are unlimited scenic and recreational opportunities in this 13-mile section. A full range of views and a variety of trails, wildlife and unique recreational areas generate the highest use in the corridor. Along with scenic and recreational use, two growing communities are located in the Indian and Bird Creek Valley floors.

*Objective:* Section 3 should be planned and developed to take full advantage of the scenic and recreational opportunities

and to accommodate user demand, while protecting and enhancing the inherent values of the area and the communities along the corridor.

#### *Recommendations:*

1. The Seward Highway improvement project will eliminate two high-use waysides serving an important recreational area. Relocate and develop a site plan for Bird Ridge Wayside and Bird Creek Wayside that protects and enhances natural values while it accommodates present and future use.
2. Establish guidelines for development to protect and maintain the natural, scenic and recreational values along the corridor. The guidelines should apply to:
  - a. Site design including setbacks, entrances, vegetative screening, etc.
  - b. Junk disposal and removal
  - c. Vegetation removal
  - d. Signing
  - e. Utilities
3. Develop an open space and recreational plan for the communities of Indian and Bird Creek that provides opportunities for Turnagain Arm residents and is compatible with the objectives of the scenic corridor. (This need was identified by Turnagain Arm residents and included in the Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan.)
4. Stabilize and revegetate the following areas:
  - a. Waste material sites
  - b. Old road sections
  - c. Cut and fill slopes
  - d. Road shoulders
  - e. Borrow pits
  - f. Erosion areas

## Section 4, Avalanche Gate to Girdwood

After crossing the valley floors of Indian and Bird Creek, the corridor rises gently along the slopes of Penguin Mountain and then descends to Bird Point. The highway skirts the rock outcroppings at Bird Point, and again, climbs high above the

arm, continuing until it drops into the Glacier Creek Valley at Girdwood. The main landscape type along this section of the corridor is steep brushy mountainside, an ideal habitat for mountain goats. The steep slopes lack mature vegetation due to heavy avalanching. Over 50 percent of the slopes in this section are avalanche paths that cross the corridor and make traveling hazardous during the winter. This section of the Seward Highway is scheduled for improvement after Phase III is completed.

*Scenic Potential:* The near views prior to Bird Point are restricted by vegetative screening along the corridor. After Bird Point, near views of the alpine meadows and brushy slopes dropping into the arm are unique to this section of the corridor. Middle and distant views are also excellent from the higher elevations along the mountain slopes. On a clear day, a highway traveler can see well into Portage Valley. If a blue hue is evident, then Portage Glacier can be seen at its best. Alyeska Mountain, the entrance to Turnagain Pass, and Bird Point in its entirety can be seen from the higher elevations of this section.

*Recreational Potential:* The recreational potential of this section is somewhat restricted due to the steep slopes and limited land area. At one time the Iditarod Trail traversed these slopes, leading to Indian Pass and the interior of Alaska. Today the trail is grown over or covered by the Seward highway. Unique recreation opportunities exist at Bird Point, the avalanche slopes, and at the beach strand opposite old Girdwood. Bird Point is both rock outcroppings and coastal marsh, located in the seaside of the scenic corridor. The point is a large area, capable of accommodating a variety of uses, if sensitively planned and developed. The avalanche slopes provide access in the summer to the higher elevation alpine tundra areas, and the beach strand in the Glacier Creek wetlands provides a unique landscape and interesting waterfowl habitat. The areas around Glacier Creek and its tributaries, Crow Creek and California Creek, though outside the corridor, are mentioned because of their present recreational use. Alyeska, Alaska's largest resort, used by a variety of recreationalists both in summer and winter, is in this area.

SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL SITES		
Mile	Site	Type
21.7	Bird Point	Recreational
27.9	Glacier Creek Wetlands	Scenic

*Management Considerations:* The scenic corridor between the Avalanche Gate and Girdwood has a number of scenic and recreational opportunities that are underdeveloped and underutilized. The steep slopes limit the land area and make winter use hazardous due to avalanches. Excellent 180° views exist, easily seen when traveling in either direction. Views, combined with the highest elevations along the highway, make this section of the corridor unlike any of the others.

*Objective:* Section 4 should be planned and developed to take advantage of the unique scenic and recreational opportunities, while avoiding hazards and protecting and enhancing the inherent values along the corridor.

*Recommendations:*

1. Identify and reestablish the Iditarod Trail between Indian and Girdwood.
2. Establish a typical wayside (see Sites) associated with the new Avalanche Gate.
3. Develop a master plan for Bird Point that provides scenic and recreational opportunities at a unique seaside site.
4. Design and develop two typical waysides for scenic use in summer along the avalanche slope.
5. Design and develop a year-round scenic wayside at the avalanche safety zone.
6. Stabilize and revegetate the following areas:
  - a. Old Avalanche Gate
  - b. Old road sections
  - c. Cut and fill slopes
  - d. Road shoulders
  - e. Borrow pits
  - f. Erosion areas

## Section 5, Girdwood to Ingram Creek

Section 5 of the corridor extends 12 miles from Girdwood across several creek bottoms and river deltas to the end of Turnagain Arm where, in the early part of this century, a causeway and corduroy road carried travelers to their destination. The corridor continues along the arm to the end of the municipal

boundary and then ascends the Ingram Creek Valley toward Turnagain Pass. The predominant landscape types in this section are tidelands, coastal marsh and wetlands interspersed with coastal forests. The river and creek valleys contain an abundance of birds and wildlife and their waters contain resident trout and spawning salmon in summer.

At Girdwood the railroad crosses the highway to the upland side and continues to the end of the arm, where it divides into two routes. One route, following Portage Creek, tunnels through the Chugach Range to the Port of Whittier. The other route, following Placer River Valley to Johnson Pass, continues to the Port of Seward. The overhead utility lines cross from the uplands into the tideland where they continue and parallel the Johnson Pass route of the railroad.

*Scenic Potential:* The near views along the corridor are very good, with the exception of common landscape around Kern. The quality of the middle and distant views outweighs the effects of common landscape at any point in Section 5. The tideland and coastal wetlands of Glacier, Peterson and Portage creeks and Twenty Mile and Placer rivers offer unique land-form and vegetation. The valleys of these creeks and rivers also cut deep into the Chugach Range, exposing broad forested valleys, glaciers and generally remarkable middle and distant views.

*Recreation Potential:* At present, the recreational potential in this section is minimal and limited to the creeks and rivers. Twenty Mile and Placer rivers are navigable by canoes and river-boats. Tidal influences occur as far up river as six miles. These areas are used in summer for fishing and camping, and in winter for snowmobiling. River access is undeveloped, though the U.S. Forest Service maintains two waysides at Placer River and is considering building a boat ramp at Twenty Mile River. Portage Creek and Valley are used both in summer and winter.

### SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL SITES

Mile	Site	Type
36.7	BLM Overlook	Scenic
39.2	U.S. Forest Service Wayside	Recreational
39.7	U.S. Forest Service Wayside	Recreational

*Management Considerations:* The potential scenic and recreational opportunities that exist in this section are underdeveloped and underutilized. Scenic opportunities along the corridor and recreational opportunities along the variety of creek and river valleys could be developed to relieve other sections of the corridor and generally expand recreation in close proximity to Anchorage.

*Objective:* Section 5 should be planned and developed to exploit the unique scenic and recreational opportunities, while protecting and enhancing the inherent value along the corridor.

*Recommendations:*

1. Establish guidelines for development at Girdwood and Portage to protect and enhance the natural, scenic and recreational values along the corridor. Guidelines should apply to:
  - a. Site design including setbacks, entrances, vegetative screening
  - b. Junk and disposal ordinance
  - c. Vegetation removal
  - d. Signing
  - e. Utilities
2. Relocate or screen the overhead utility lines now located in the tidelands and beach strand.
3. Develop a typical wayside at Kern Creek.
4. Develop a master plan for Twenty Mile River Basin recreation area.
5. Develop a small boat ramp to provide access up the Twenty Mile River Valley.
6. Develop a typical wayside at Ingram Creek as an entrance to the Municipality of Anchorage and the scenic corridor.



# Management Framework

# Management Framework

The management framework evaluates and outlines the critical elements necessary for devising a management plan. In researching and developing this section, both the Corridor Plan and a broader state-wide scenic highway system were considered. The framework creates the basis for a locally managed scenic corridor, but could easily be applicable to a state-wide scenic highway system. Legislation creating the Connecticut Scenic Corridor System is included in the Appendix for the reference of the reader.

The following are the basic elements in a scenic corridor plan and are used to outline this section.

- Goals for the scenic corridor.
- A definition of the scenic corridor.
- Safeguarding the scenic corridor.
- Rehabilitation and enhancement along the scenic corridor.
- Managing the scenic corridor.
- Implementing the scenic corridor concept.

## Goals for the Scenic Corridor

When establishing a scenic corridor or scenic highway system, it is important for the managing agencies and the users to formulate the goals they want the scenic designation to accomplish, to be used as the basis for future management policies. The following goals are taken from other scenic corridor plans or studies and are offered as the range of alternatives for consideration.

1. *Promote the health, safety, welfare, convenience and enjoyment of public travel on highways and roads of the state.* This broad goal is so stated to justify the use of police power. This goal is from Washington State's legislation enabling establishment of scenic areas.

2. *Protect the public investment in highways and roads.* The public investment in roads is to be protected from such activities, land uses, signs, etc. which may destroy the integrity of the road, its capacity for traffic and its visual qualities.
3. *Attract visitors to the state by conserving the natural beauty of areas adjacent to highways, and provide access to outstanding visual experiences representative of the state's variety of landscape resources and cultural attractions.* This goal seeks to support the tourist industry.
4. *Provide recreational opportunities within the highway corridors and access to the state's abundant recreational resources.*
5. *Aid the expansion of environmental education through public and private recreation and resource management programs.* This goal stresses the educational potential of a system in terms of making the resources of the state more significant and meaningful.
6. *Protect natural and cultural heritage corridors of the state.* This goal considers the importance of natural corridors related to highways as the Coastal Management Program seeks to protect the state's coastline from misuse.
7. *Protect the coastal resources of the state while increasing public access to the coastline.* This refers specifically to the goals of the Alaska Coastal Management Program.

## A Definition for the Scenic Corridor

As with the statement of goals, the definition of a scenic corridor is an important element in a management plan. Two definitions have been included for consideration. The first is a broad definition allowing the designation of a scenic corridor by a local level of government.

"Scenic corridor means that portion of highways, roads or streets which provide outstanding visual resources and/or recreational opportunities."

The second definition requires legislative authority for designating scenic corridors and provides for both a local and a state scenic highway system.

"The scenic highway system is comprised of those sections of the state highways, roads and streets designated by appropriate authority according to criteria established by the legislature, which provide outstanding visual resources and/or give access to recreational facilities."

## Safeguarding the Scenic Corridor

Without adequate protection the natural, scenic, historic and recreational values along the corridor may decline as a result of future development. In the case of the Seward Highway Scenic Corridor, it is important to remember that 93 percent of the land along the highway is publicly owned. Private ownership is limited to the communities of Rainbow Valley, Indian/Bird Creek, Girdwood and Portage and comprises only seven percent of the highway frontage. Publicly owned land is less likely to receive unacceptable modifications than privately owned land, and yet, land management agencies responsible for the corridor have differing objectives and a variety of proposals that could have negative impacts.

To protect the corridor, it is necessary to identify a management zone and to develop the appropriate controls. The management zone, the area to which the management plan applies, can be broken into the inner zone or foreground and the outer zone or middle ground. One simple and cost-effective approach to controlling activities along the corridor is to work within the highway right-of-way or the foreground. Often, by working within the right-of-way, the entire corridor can be effectively managed. The following are good examples:

- A screen of trees and shrubs can permanently block from view objectionable modifications to the landscape and undesirable views.
- In heavily forested areas, careful timber harvesting can open "windows" which greatly extend the depth of the field of vision.



TABLE 1

Mechanism	Effectiveness	Cost	Ease of Administration	Comments
Wider-than-usual right-of-way	Could be most effective, but the area would need to be very limited	Cost would be very high, probably prohibitive	Easy to administer because control would be obsolete	Private property owners would probably resent "excessive" acquisition by government
Outright acquisition of either inner or outer zones of corridor	Very effective if authorized and permitted by courts	Costs could be burdensome, even prohibitive	No special problems of administration except contesting some antagonism against public authority "being in the real estate business"	
Fee acquisition and leaseback	Very effective	Very costly and requires large capital outlays which are later repaid in part	May be difficult to sell property owners on the idea; extends the public domain considerably	Facilitates maintenance; keeps the corridor "alive"
Acquisition of scenic or conservation easements	Could be quite effective if right kind of easement acquired	Cost would be reasonable in some cases, considerable in others, especially in or close to urban areas; costs in these instances might be so great that outright acquisition would be more reasonable	No particular difficulties except one of educating the public	
Zoning at local level	Not very effective—only as effective as zoning is; subject to pressure	No cost except that of administering the program	Same difficulties as those associated with zoning today and maybe a few more because this would be a new application	Generally, not a very happy solution
Zoning at state level	Hardly ever has been used—its legal fate is largely unknown; if politics were kept out of administration, might be reasonably effective, but it is essential that it be done	No costs other than administrative costs	Administration would be subject to the same detail as local zoning	
Scenic highway corridor reservation (state level)	If sustained in courts as a valid exercise of police power, could be reasonably effective, would require a new legal concept; would have none of legal or popular encumbrances of zoning	No costs except costs of administration of program	Once the notion is clearly defined there should be no difficulties of administration; in fact, large areas could be so regulated with a minimum of public effort	Well worth a try
Special conservation or corridor districts	Could be one of the most effective, but would be a broad new application of a relatively new device	Would be negligible, only costs of administration	No significant problems of administration	Offers considerable promise
Comprehensive planning	Would be effective if the device is applied in its best and broadest connotations	Generally, only costs would be those of administration, unless acquisition mechanisms are considered part of this process as they might be	Usual problems, which may be many, of a comprehensive planning approach	
Restrictive covenants	Could be helpful in a small, limited area, but should hardly be relied on for an entire scenic road project; is more of a supplement, particularly in urban areas	None, except small costs to property owners	Handled privately, perhaps under government auspices	

- Overlooks can be constructed, road segments relocated, and spur roads added to obtain a desired change in the depth of the corridor visible from the roads.

Controlling activities in the middle ground is more difficult and costly, particularly when acquisition of privately owned land is involved.

There are basically two approaches to controlling activities within the management zone. Control may be exercised by using police power without compensation or by purchasing the land or the desired easements. Table 1 is a simple chart illustrating the effectiveness, costs and ease of administration of specific mechanisms to protect the scenic corridor. In summary, the potential mechanisms available for safeguarding the scenic corridor are as follows:

- Wider than normal rights-of-way
- Outright acquisition
- Fee acquisition and leaseback
- Acquisition of scenic or conservation easements
- Zoning at the local level
- Zoning at the state level
- Scenic highway corridor reservations
- Special conservation or corridor districts
- Comprehensive planning
- Restrictive covenants

After examining the various approaches to designating the management zone and protecting the corridor, the following recommendations are made.

**Management Zone:** Designate both an inner and outer management zone for the scenic corridor. The inner zone should coincide with the Seward Highway right-of-way. The right-of-way is approximately 200 feet wide and includes the entrances, parking areas and in some cases, the structures for most of the private land development adjacent to the highway. The outer zone should extend an additional 200 feet beyond the right-of-way. The 200-foot designation includes an entire lot-width of privately owned land and includes most of the proposed sites and improvements on publicly owned land. The entire management zone should be approximately 600 feet wide, depending upon right-of-way width.

**Control:** The Municipality of Anchorage should adopt an enabling ordinance establishing the Seward Highway Scenic Corridor. This mechanism, effectively used by state governments, is also appropriate for local government. Anchorage, as a unified municipal government, has planning powers along the Seward Highway, and as a coastal management district, requires state and federal government to be consistent with municipal plans. The ordinance establishing the scenic corridor should include the following:

1. Require an approved site plan for any new structures and major alterations within the inner zone.
2. Require authorizations for any public facilities, utilities, recreation sites, etc., within the management zone.
3. Require an approved site plan for vegetation removal in the inner zone except for general maintenance.
4. Establish restrictions and guidelines for junk disposal and removal within the management zone.
5. Establish a signing standard for the management zone.

In determining the safeguards appropriate for the corridor, the single most important factor is the amount of privately owned land to be affected. In the case of the Seward Highway, the private land adjacent to the corridor is minimal in comparison to the amount of publicly owned land.

The ordinance should also establish a process for the purchase of scenic or conservation easements in the inner zone where private property abutts the Seward Highway, if the highway right-of-way is not sufficient to control activity affecting the quality of the corridor. Based upon experience in other states, the cost of easements is estimated at 20 percent of the assessed land value.

### Rehabilitation and Enhancement along the Corridor

Once a management program is developed and safeguards have been established to protect the existing values along the corridor, an inventory should be undertaken to identify visual

problems or rehabilitation needs. This is the first step in a rehabilitation program. When the needs have been identified, the problem areas should be prioritized to treat the most critical areas first.

Visual problems and rehabilitation needs are generally identified in the Environmental Synthesis section of this report. Recommended approaches are also included in the same section to treat problems along the corridor. A general inventory has revealed:

1. Ninety percent of the problems that exist today are within the inner zone or highway right-of-way.
2. A majority of these problems exist due to activities undertaken by local, state or federal government.
3. Stabilization and revegetation will alleviate most of the problems that exist along the corridor.

Visual distractions associated with private development are always difficult to treat. On one hand, homesites and businesses carved out of the wilderness often look unsightly to the observer who is used to the order of an urban setting. By the same token, wrecked cars, defoliated areas, and trash—found along the highway—detract from the scenic resources of the area. For future development, a review and approval of the site plan will guarantee that standards are met. For existing development, it is possible to control future improvements within a site, or to order unsightly cars and trash to be removed as part of the ordinance establishing the scenic corridor. But a landowner cannot be forced to rehabilitate or improve his property to meet standards set for the corridor, and it would be unfair or unreasonable to make such a request. Instead, the municipality, in conjunction with the managing agencies in a particular part of the corridor, should provide incentives or grants for improving problem areas.

An excellent opportunity for improving privately owned sites at Rainbow, Indian and Bird Creek exists at present as part of the Phase III Seward Highway Improvement Project. An approach would be to get landowners involved in entrance and site design within the right-of-way to be funded and constructed as part of the highway project. This opportunity will also occur again in the future as the highway improvements continue along the arm.

### Managing the Scenic Corridor

The Municipality of Anchorage is the only level of government with the powers and jurisdiction to implement and manage the entire scenic corridor. If a statewide scenic highway system is created, the Seward Highway Scenic Corridor should become part of it, with management responsibility reverting to the state.

The municipality should encourage the various state and federal agencies with land management responsibilities along the corridor to participate in a management team that would essentially oversee and guide the development of the corridor. The management team should be composed of members from:

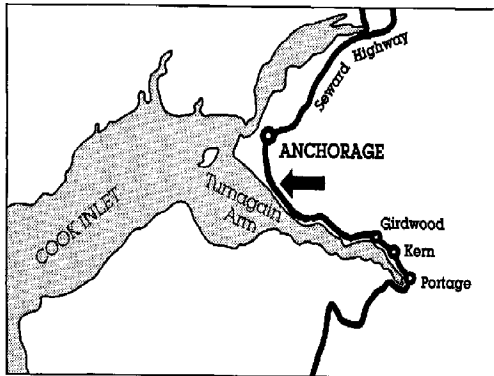
- Municipality of Anchorage
- Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
- Alaska Division of Parks
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Alaska Department of Public Safety
- The Alaska Railroad
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management

The management team should be formalized with a cooperative management agreement and should be embodied with the responsibility for:

1. Establishing goals for the scenic corridor.
2. Formulating policies to guide development of the corridor.
3. Developing a cooperative management plan for the scenic corridor.
4. Recommending action on both public and private development proposals to the municipal assembly.

The permit system within the municipality should be used to implement the regulations and controls outlined in the ordinance creating the scenic corridor.

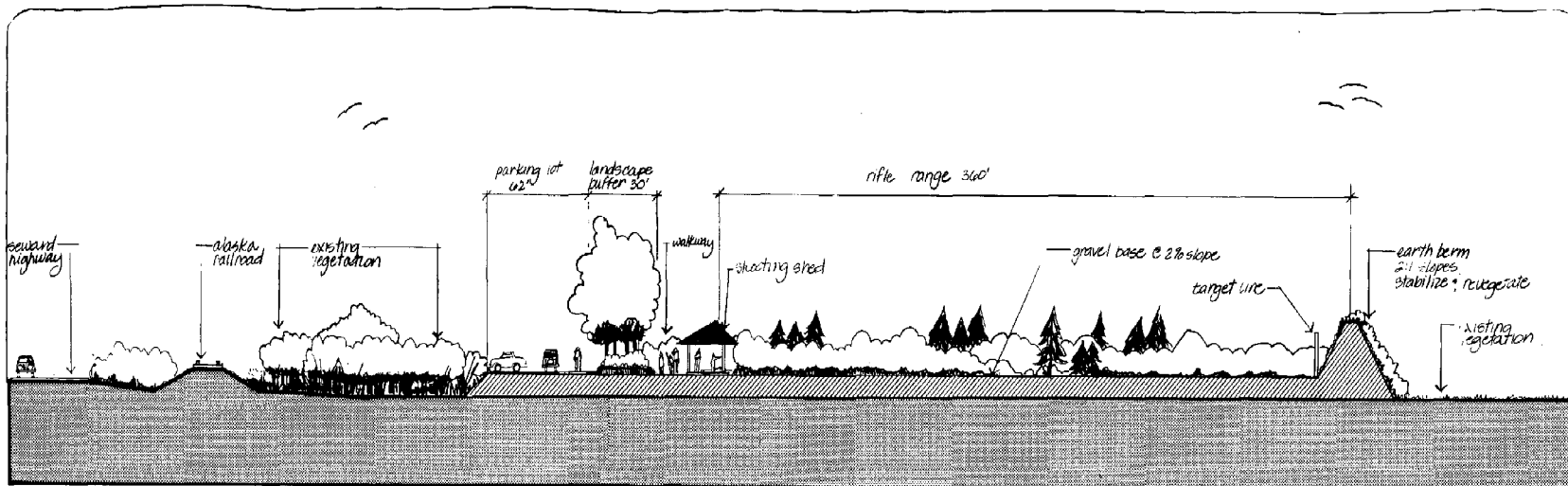
Site Selections



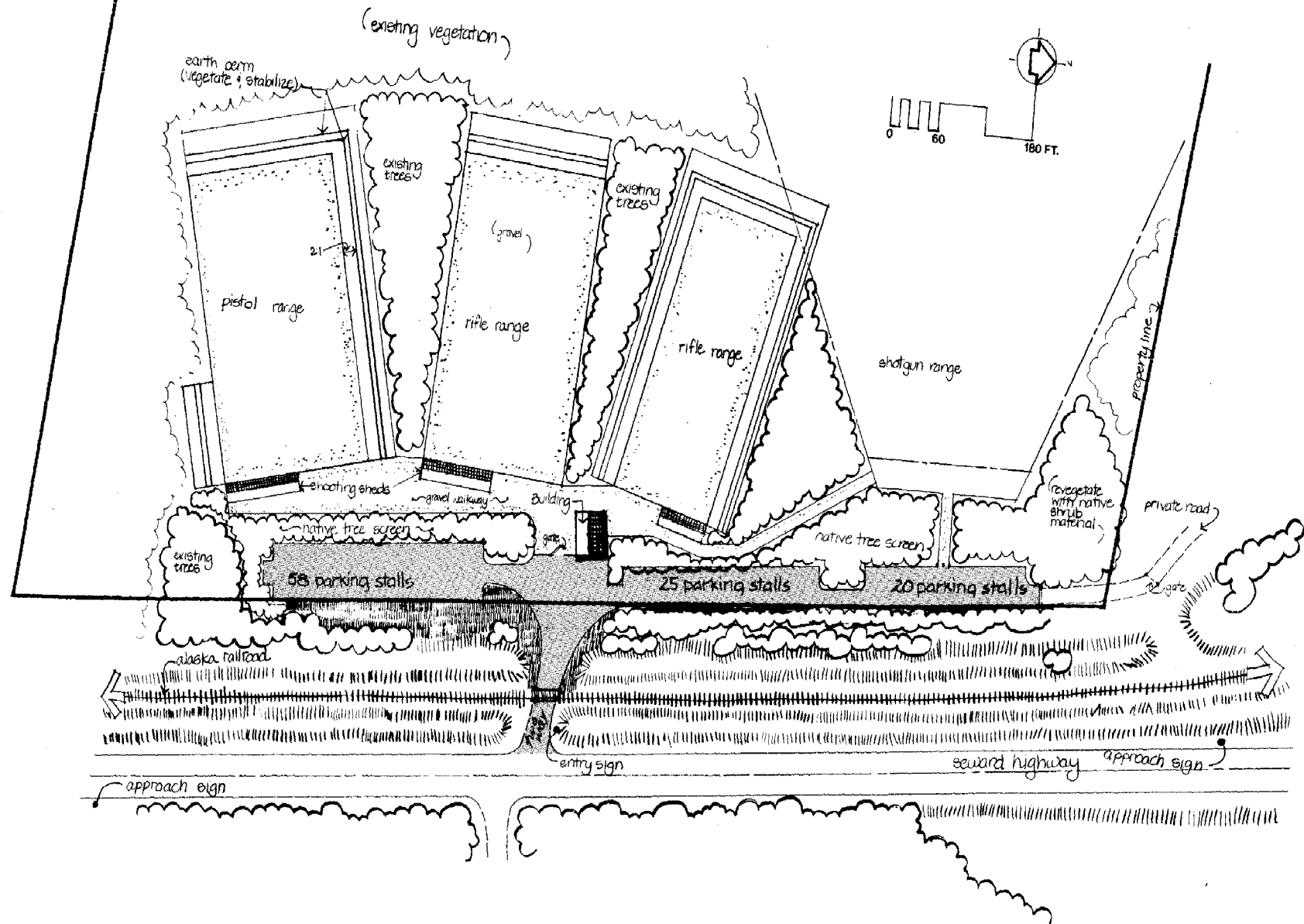
### Rabbit Creek Rifle Range

The 57-acre Rabbit Creek Rifle Range was opened in 1953 and was operated by the Alaska Range Association, a sportmen's organization, under authority of the Recreational and Public Purposes Act which mandates recreational use in perpetuity. In 1980 the rifle range was purchased by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the agency responsible for managing the adjoining Potter Point State Game Refuge. A master plan and management scheme, which includes both the rifle range and the wildlife refuge, is being prepared at this time.

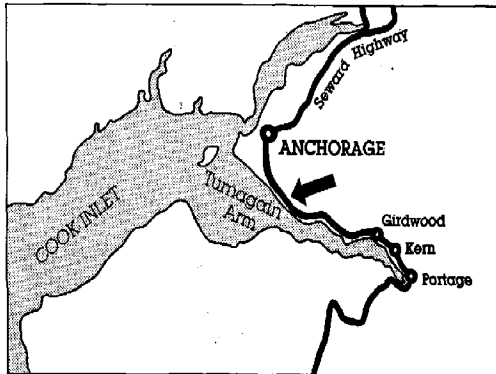
The rifle range is located at Mile .5 in Section 1 of the Seward Highway Corridor. Adjacent to the range are the proposed New Seward Highway Scenic Overlook, a series of turn-outs along Potter's Marsh, and a proposed Coastal Trail. Adjacent uses and the proximity to the Potter Point State Game Refuge warrants that the rifle range be given special consideration. This site plan offers a concept that improves the safety and function of the range, while blending the site, to the extent possible, into the natural setting, thereby increasing the compatibility with the adjacent uses.



**Rabbit Creek Rifle Range — Section**



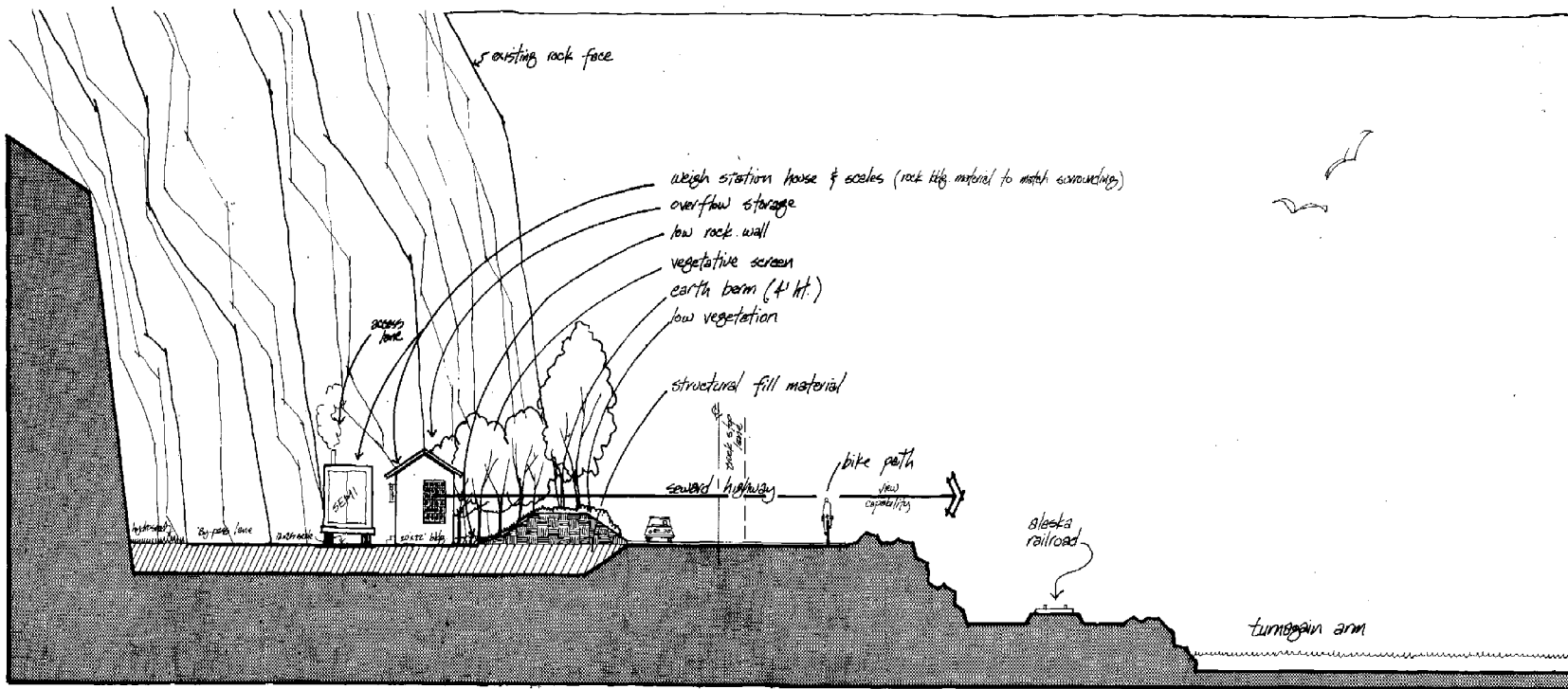
Plan



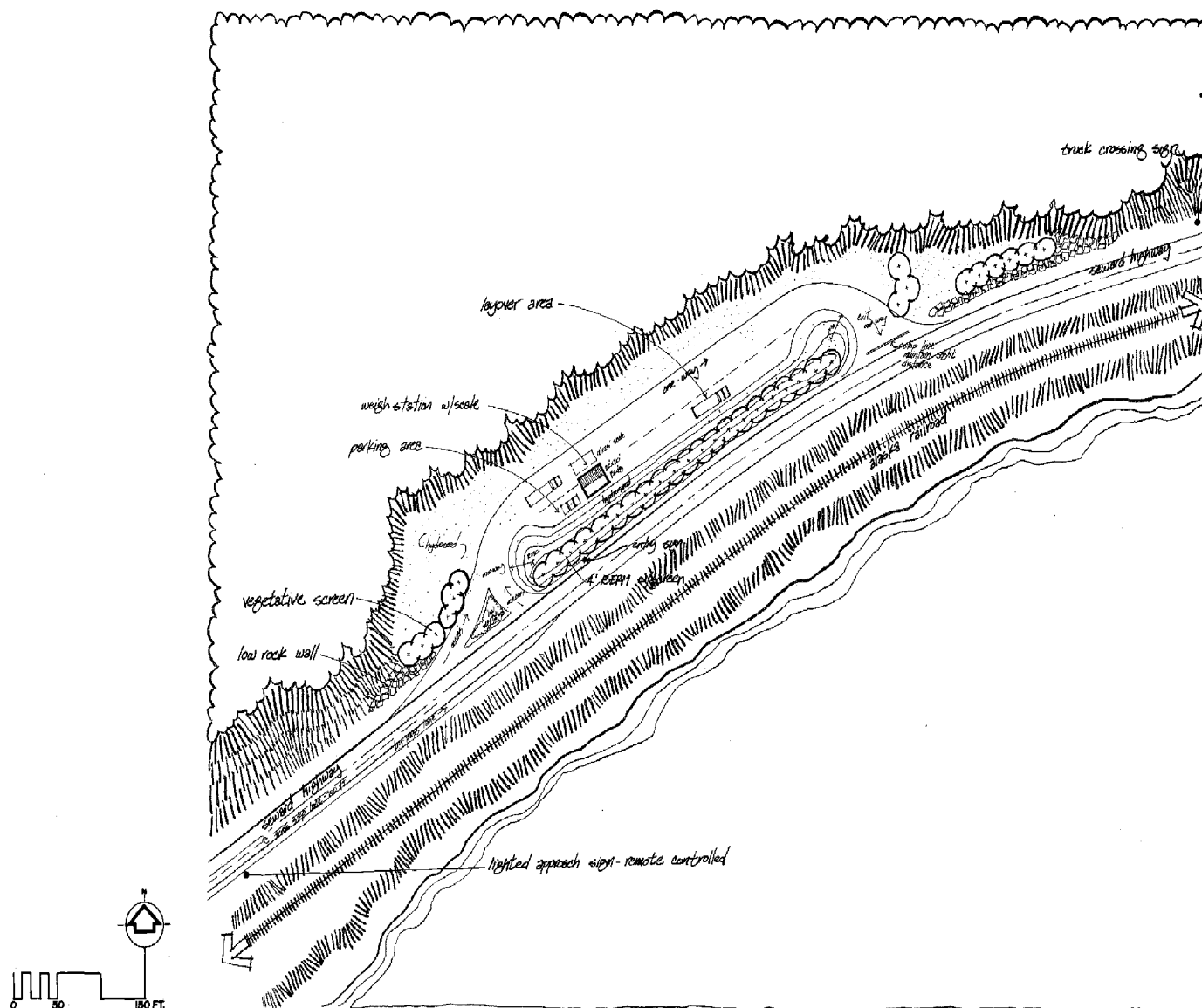
### Potter Weigh Station

The Potter Weigh Station, located at Mile 2.6 on the Seward Highway, services truck traffic between southcentral Alaska and the Kenai Peninsula. The present site, at the intersection of the old and new Seward highways adjacent to Potter Marsh, has been identified for the proposed Potter Marsh Nature Center. The center is intended to be a major facility for support activities and interpretive programs related to the wildlife refuge. In addition, renovation of the historic Potter Section House and a new trailhead for Johnson Trail at Potter Creek are also proposed as auxiliary uses.

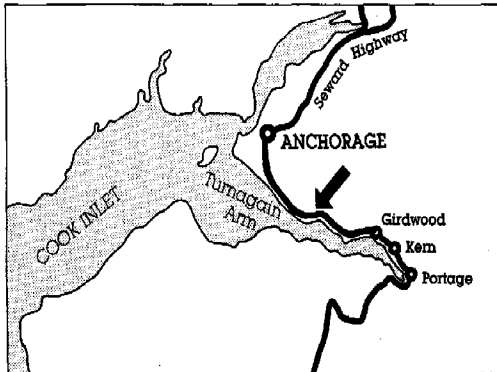
It is recommended that a new weigh station be built approximately one-half mile away at Mile 3.3. The conceptual site plan combines the weigh station, storage area and parking into a unique site which was once an old section of the Seward Highway. To blend with the setting, the site will have a vegetative screen and structures will be designed to incorporate indigenous materials.



Potter Weigh Station — Section



## Plan

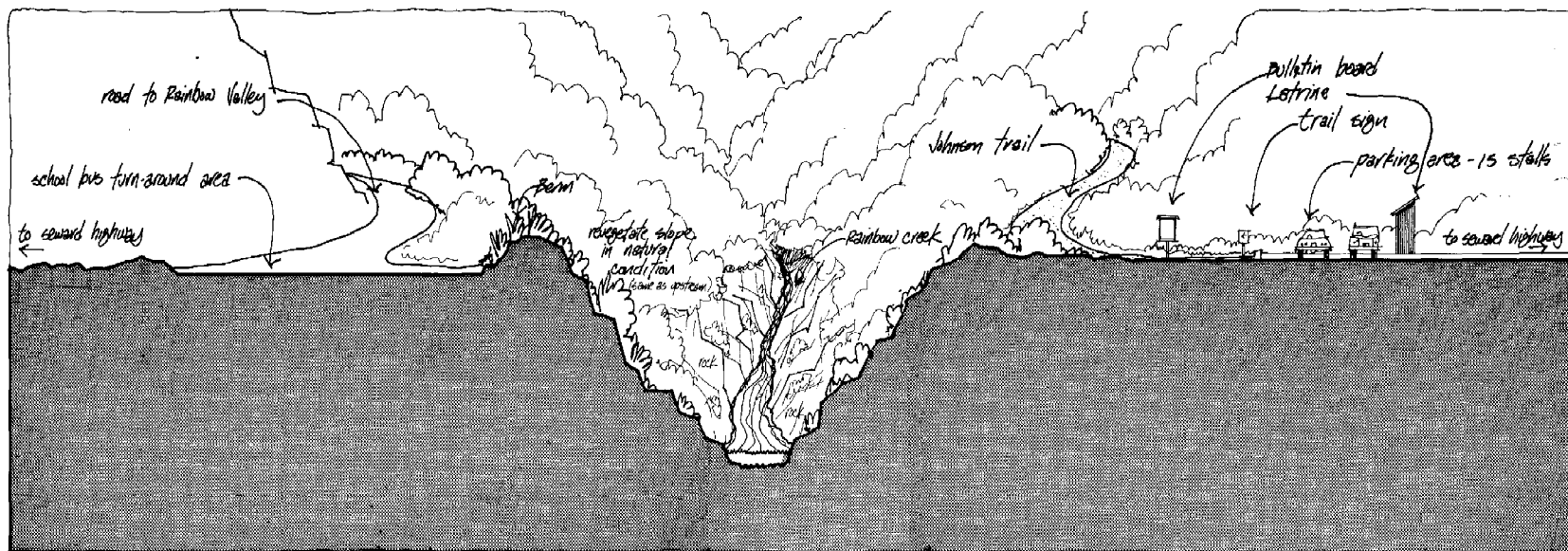


### Johnson Trailhead at Rainbow

The proposed realignment of the Seward Highway will bypass both the entrance to the community of Rainbow Valley and the Johnson Trailhead. As part of the Seward Highway improvement, the old highway and the Indian Creek culvert will be removed and regraded to match the existing contours. This improvement will define and separate the entrance to the community and the Johnson Trailhead, which is considered highly desirable by local residents.

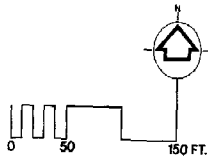
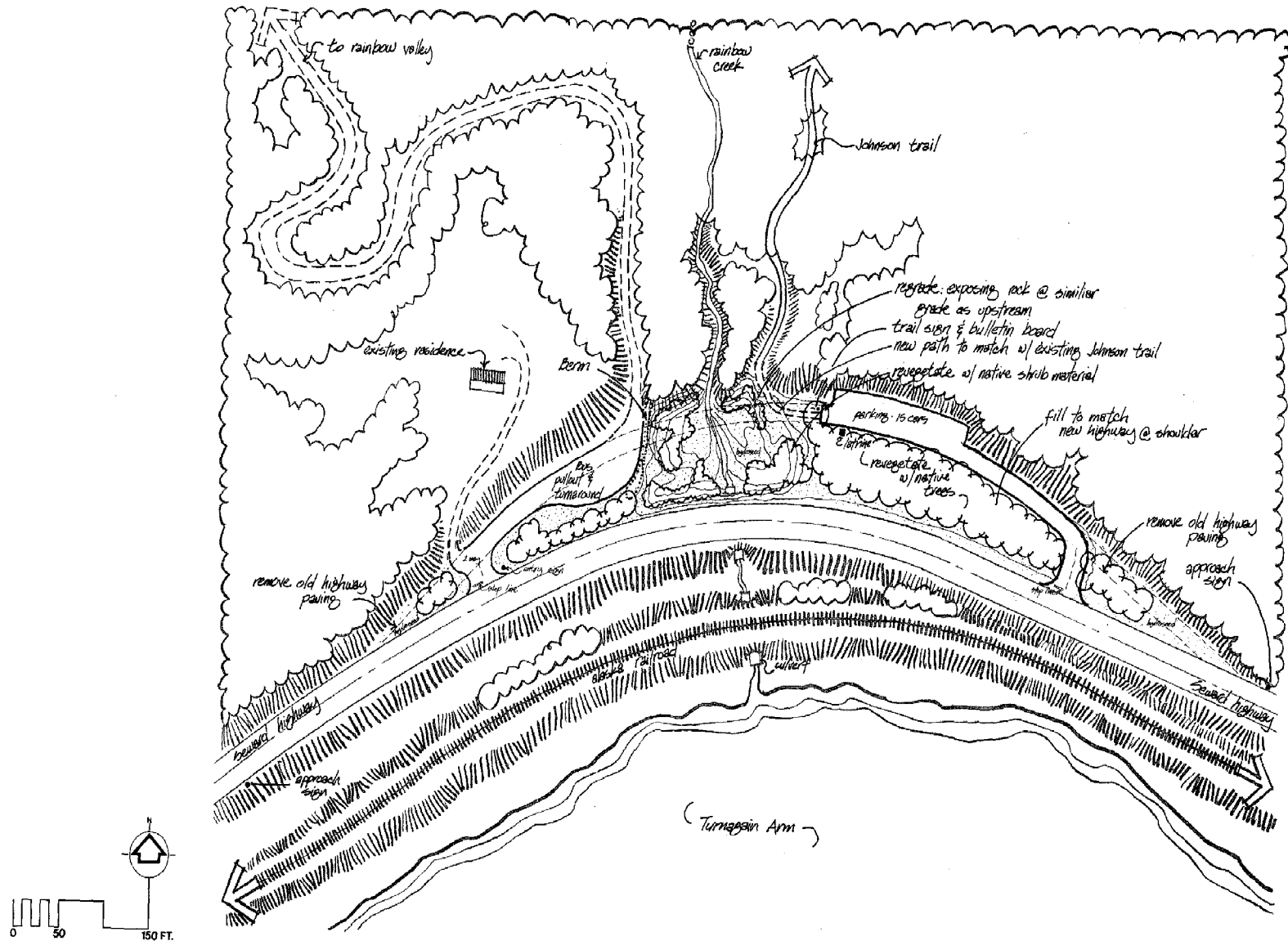
The new entrance to Rainbow Valley will be protected from through traffic and a schoolbus turnout will provide a safe location to drop off school children. Parking will also be provided to accommodate parents picking up their children and can also be used by visitors to the community.

The Johnson Trailhead and parking lot will be clearly defined on the east side of the creek with parking for 15 cars, a latrine, trail sign and a bulletin board. The old road will be used as an approach to the parking lot and will be revegetated along the shoulders with indigenous material to both screen the area and improve the natural landscape.

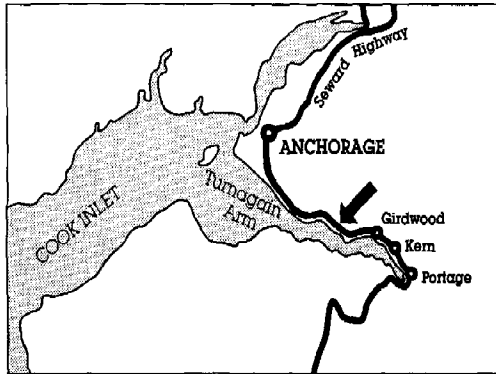


### Johnson Trailhead at Rainbow — Section



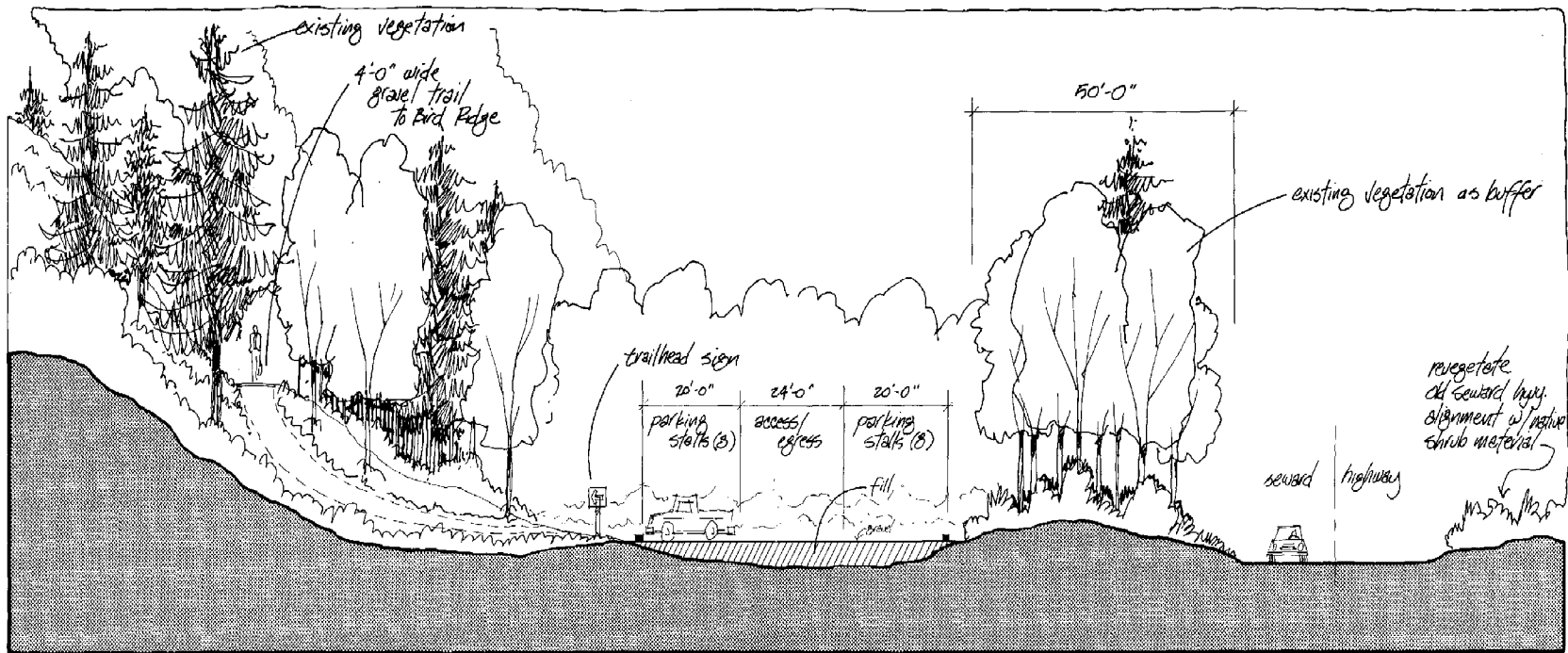


Plan

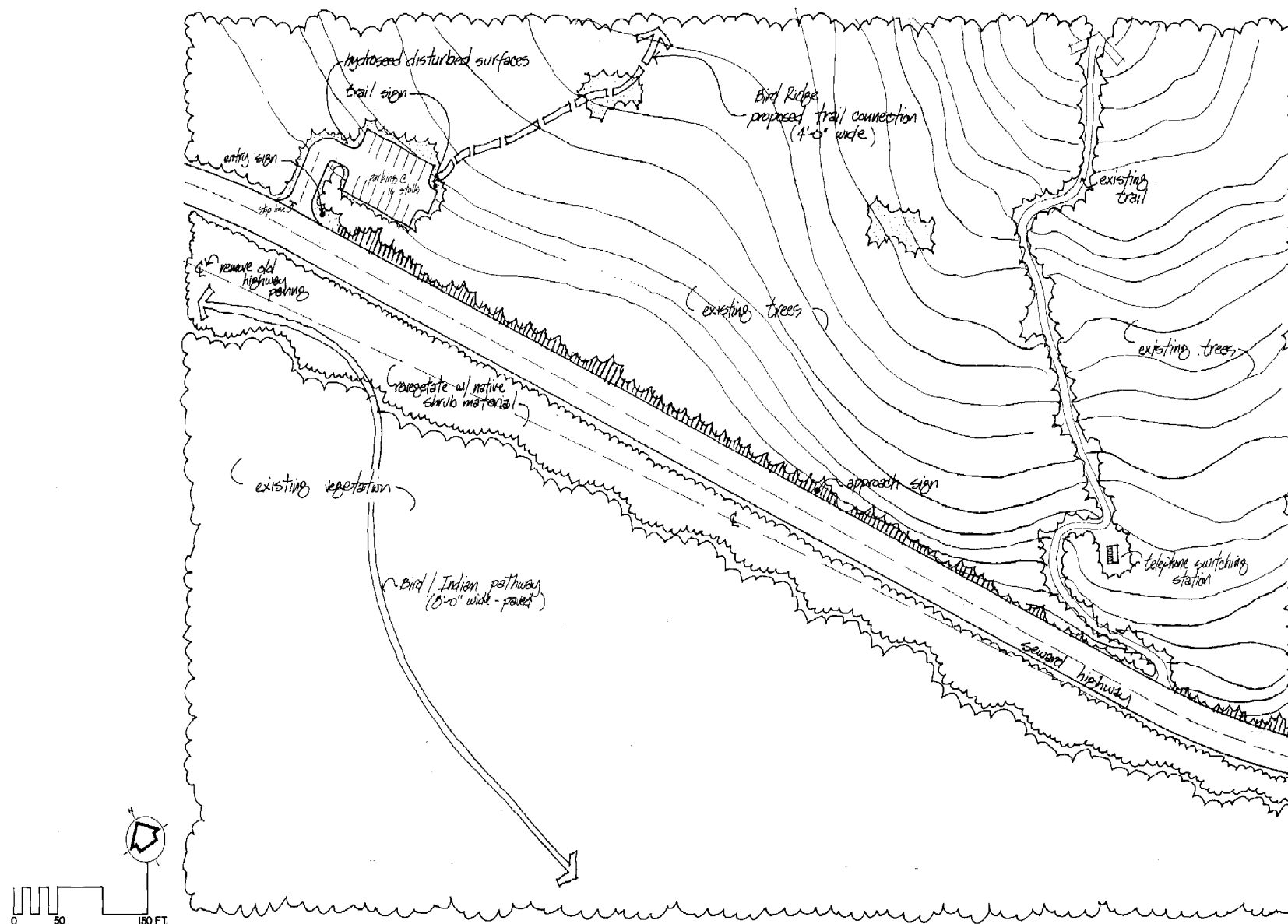


### Bird Ridge Trailhead

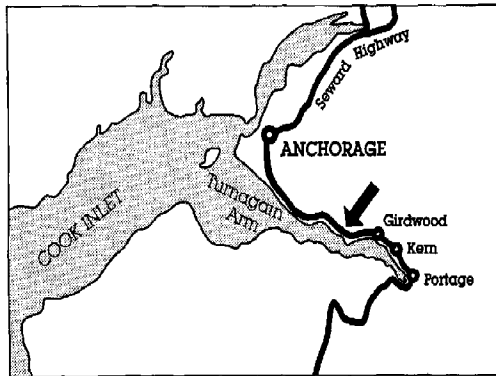
The widening of the Seward Highway, part of the proposed realignment and improvement project, will eliminate the present parking area for the Bird Ridge Trail. A proposed new site has been identified and will be developed during the highway construction. The site plan provides for a parking area accommodating 16 cars, and a new trail to connect the trailhead with Bird Ridge. The parking area will be constructed to approximate the elevation of the new highway, will be paved and have appropriate signs. A vegetative screen will provide a buffer between the highway and the parking area.



**Bird Ridge Trailhead — Section**



Plan



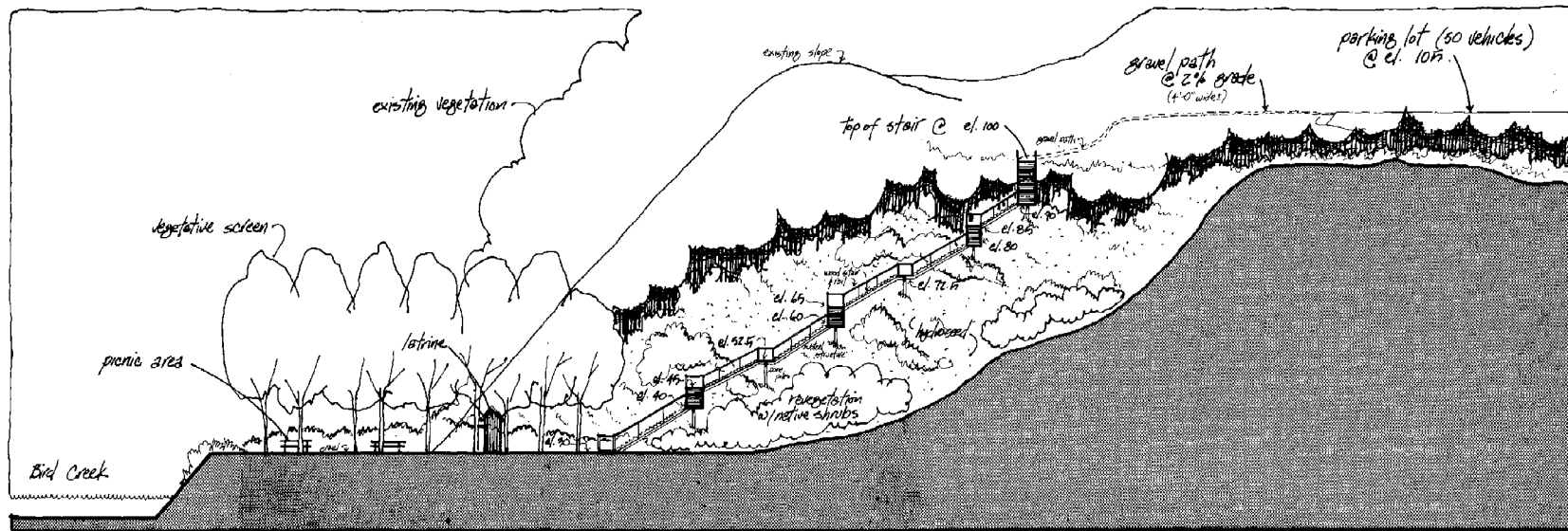
### Bird Creek Wayside

The existing parking area at Bird Creek will be significantly reduced in size by the proposed widening and realignment of the Seward Highway. A new site for a wayside to support activities along the creek has been planned and will include parking on the bluff above the creek and a picnic area at the present parking lot.

The parking area will accommodate over 50 vehicles in a rectangular configuration. The lot will be situated to maintain the maximum existing vegetation to provide a pleasant, natural setting and screen the area from view.

A trail will extend from the parking area with a gentle, two percent slope to the picnic area along Bird Creek. A staircase will descend the cut bank along the highway. The picnic area will be screened from the highway by a low berm and vegetation; a latrine, picnic tables and fireplaces will be provided.

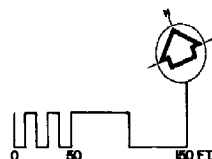
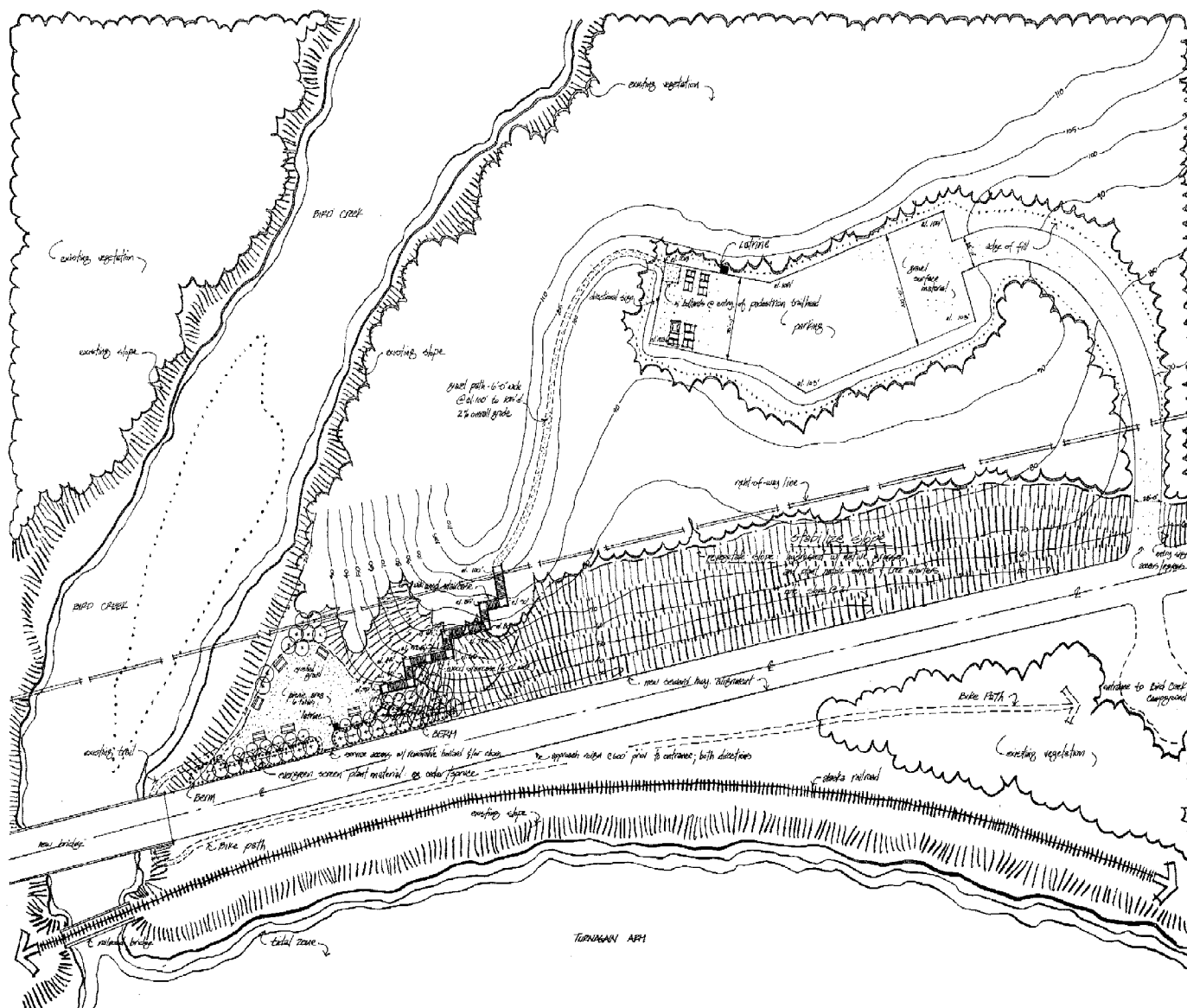
The slope along the highway will be approximately 2:1 and will require stabilization to prevent erosion and to allow a vegetative net to develop. The slope will be revegetated with both native grasses and tree starters.

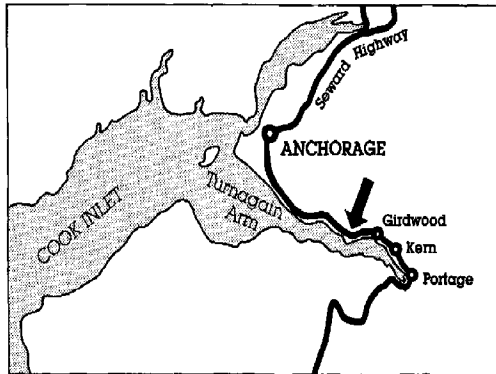


**Bird Creek Wayside — Section**

**NOTES:**

- contours shown represent post-construction elevations.
- wood staircase: 70'-0" elev. change  
 6" riser; 12" tread  
 140 steps  
 landings @ 10', 7'-6" or 8'-0" intervals  
 6'-0" wide w/handrails on two sides  
 landings supported by concrete pile footings
- vegetation:  
 25 cedars @ 14'-0" o.c.  
 125 spruces @ 12'-0" o.c.  
 all disturbed slopes to be hydroseeded w/native material & planted w/ native shrubs & tree cuttings in clumps.
- surface material:  
 parking, picnic & path areas to be filled w/ crushed gravel
- architectural elements:  
 4 signs  
 6 picnic tables  
 2 latrine w/service access
- parking:  
 approx. 60-70 vehicles can be accommodated

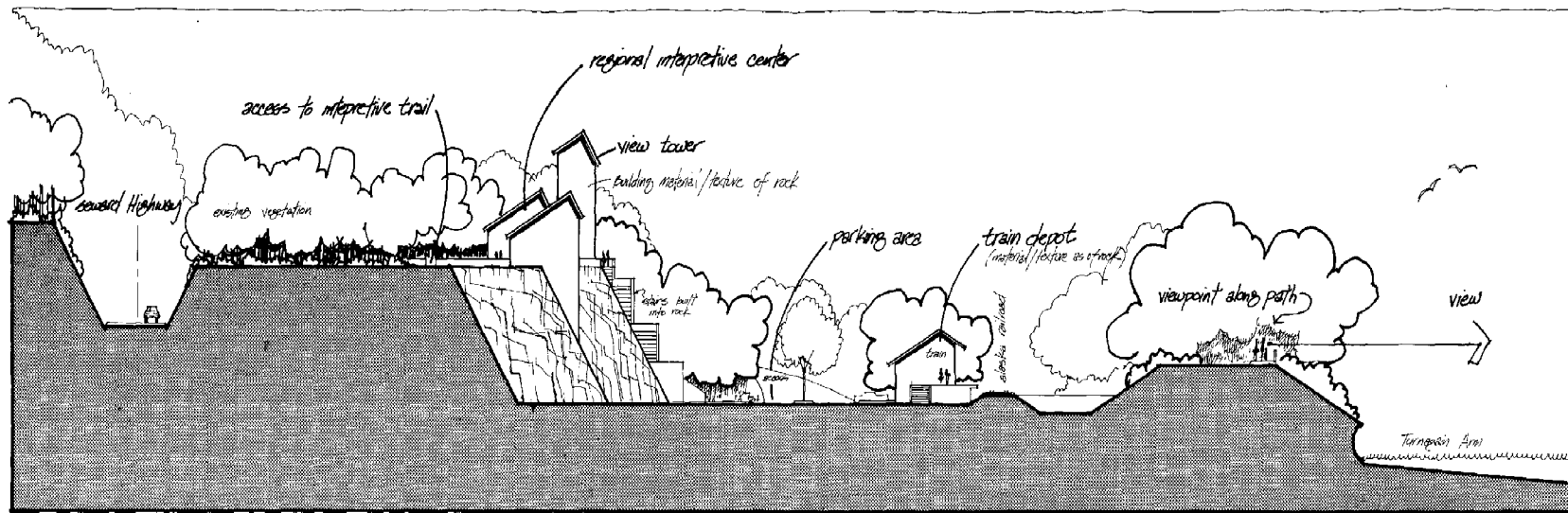
**Plan**



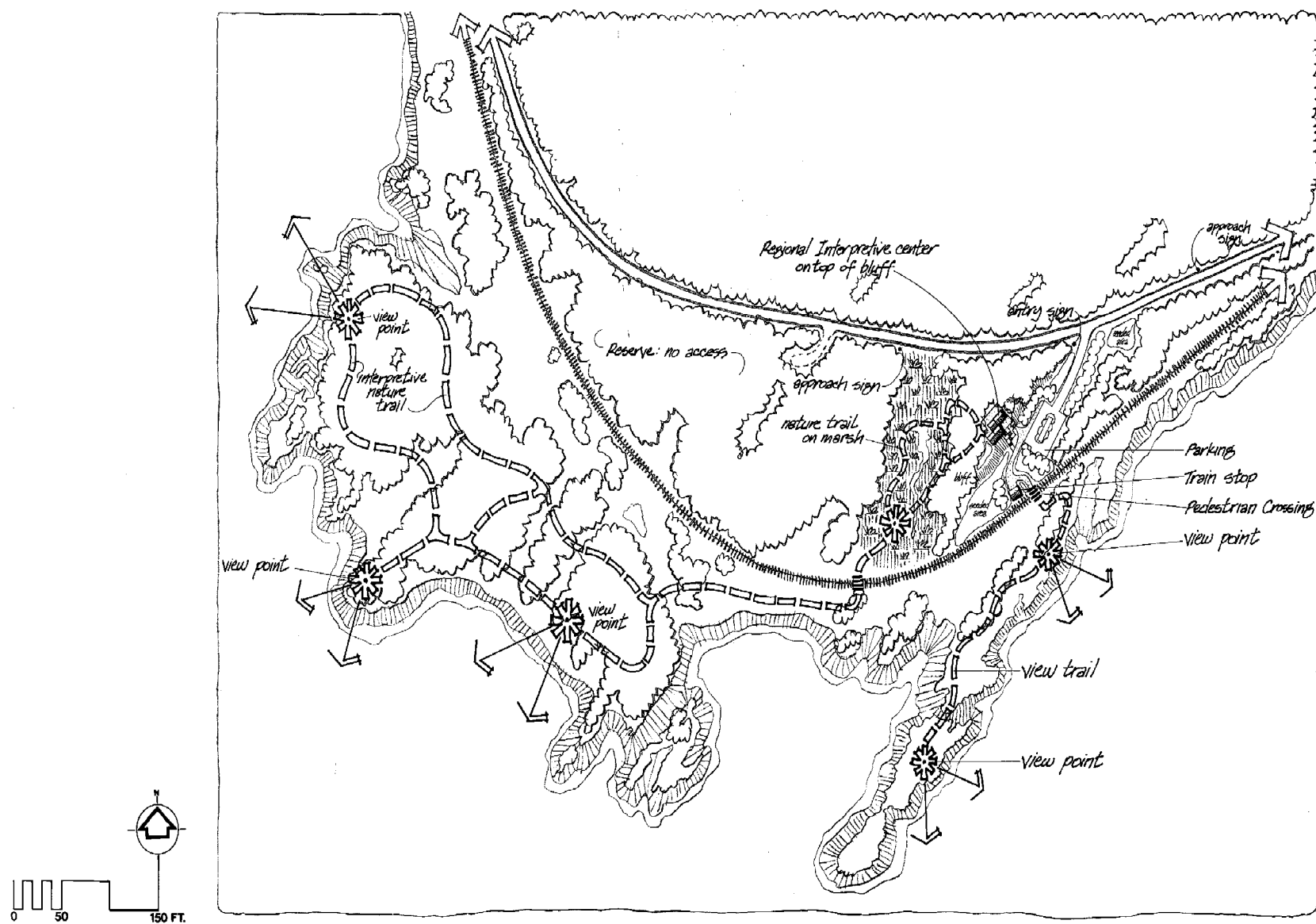
### Bird Point

Bird Point has long been recognized for its scenic and recreational value. The site is a mixture of forest, rock outcropping and tidal flats which provide a variety of landscape types and outstanding views. It is one of the few seaside sites within the Seward Highway Corridor with a land area large enough for a moderate scale of recreational development.

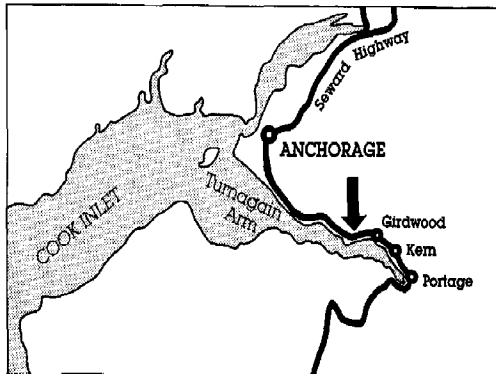
The conceptual site plan for Bird Point includes a major regional interpretive center and parking area, a train stop and passenger facility, and a series of interpretive nature trails and viewpoints. It is based on the recommendation that the area be developed to accommodate a variety of scenic and recreational needs, and yet be protected to maintain the inherent values which make Bird Point a unique site.



**Bird Point — Section**

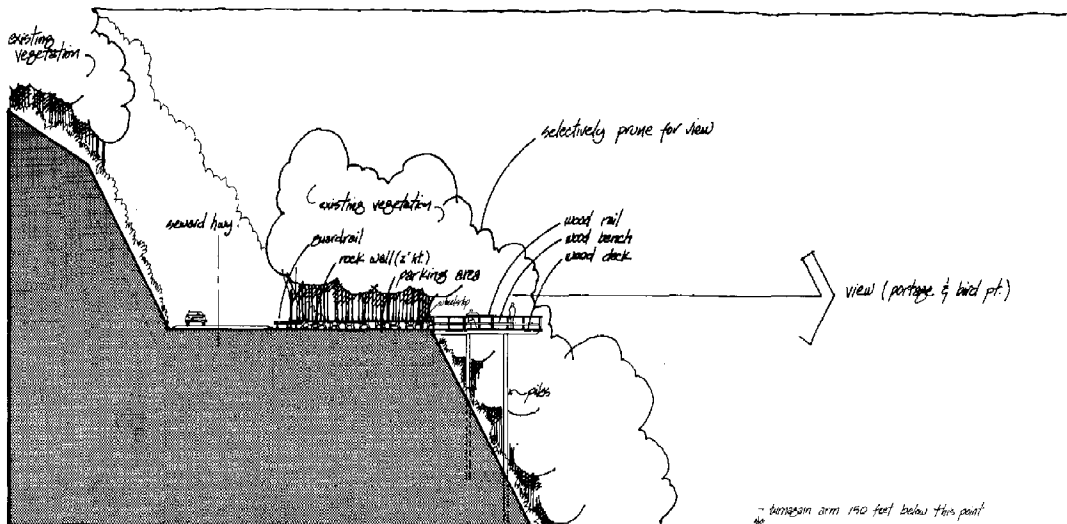


Plan



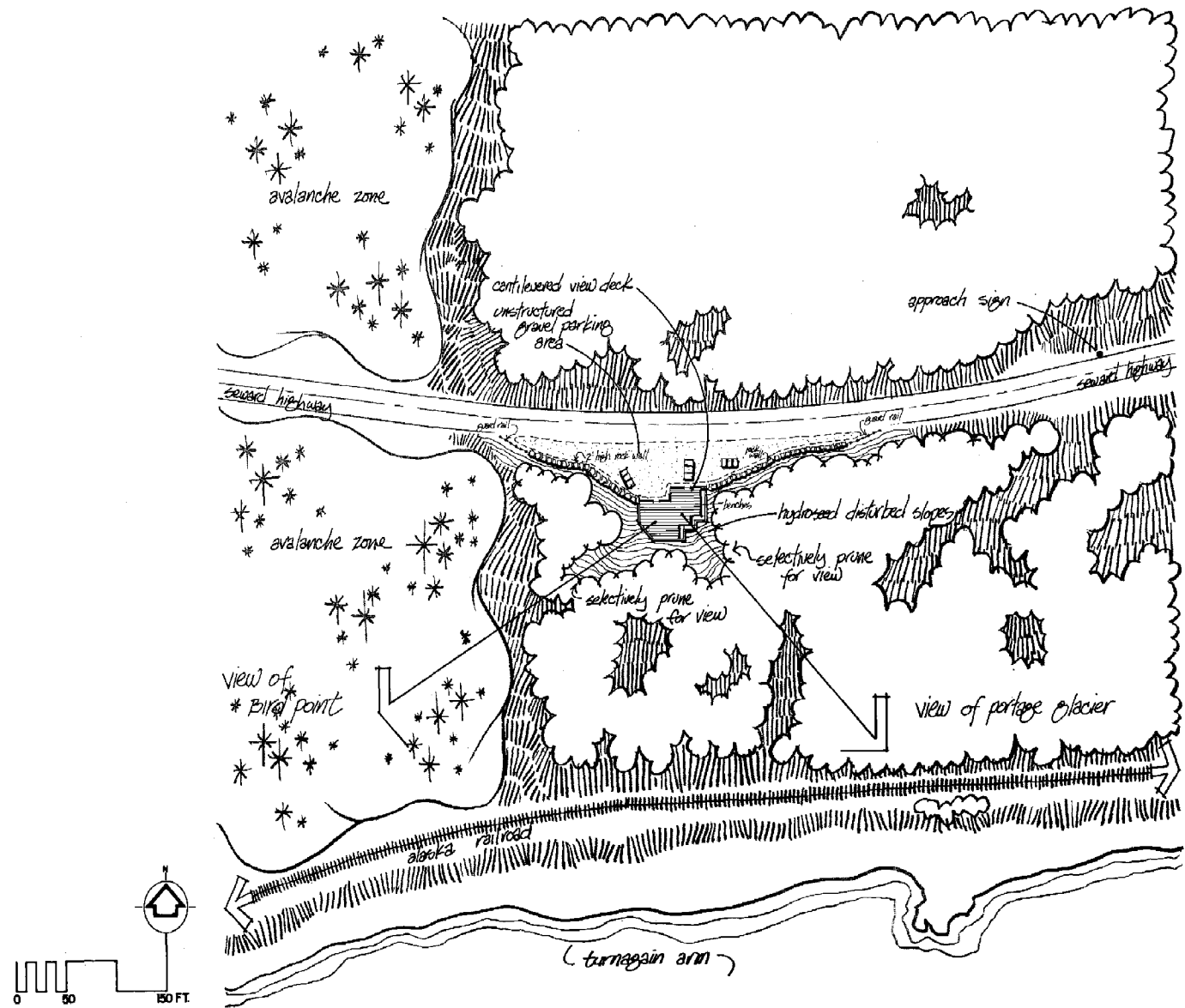
### Avalanche Safety Zone

At Mile 23 an avalanche safety zone offers winter and summer viewing of the eastern end of Turnagain Arm. The views are excellent from this elevated site and span from Bird Point to Portage Glacier. It is recommended that a cantilevered view deck be provided to maximize the viewing potential, with a rock retaining wall for safety. The conceptual site plan illustrates the deck, parking, and view potential.

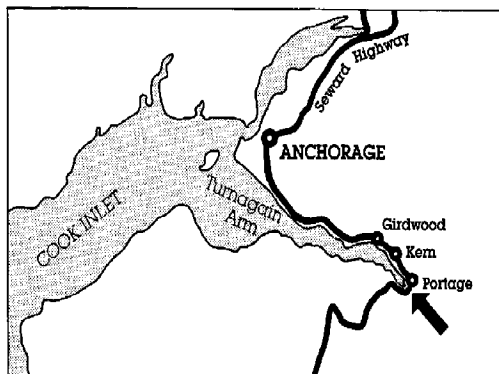


### Avalanche Safe Area — Section





Plan

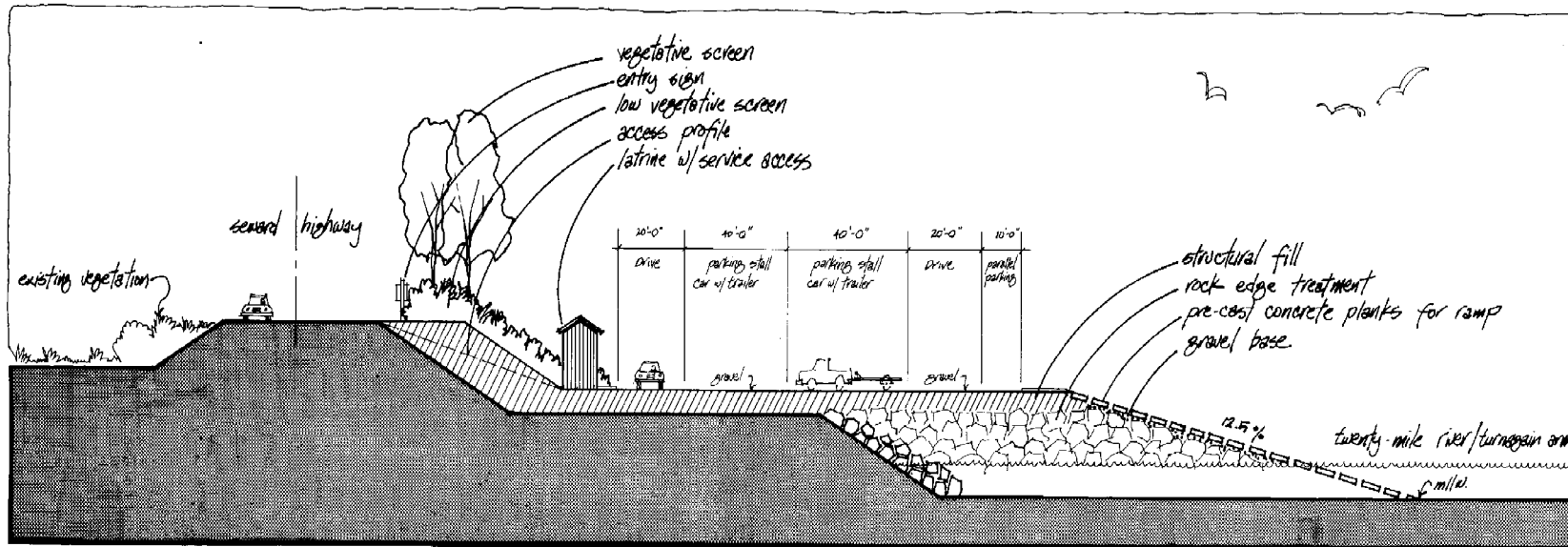


### Boat Ramp at Twenty-Mile River

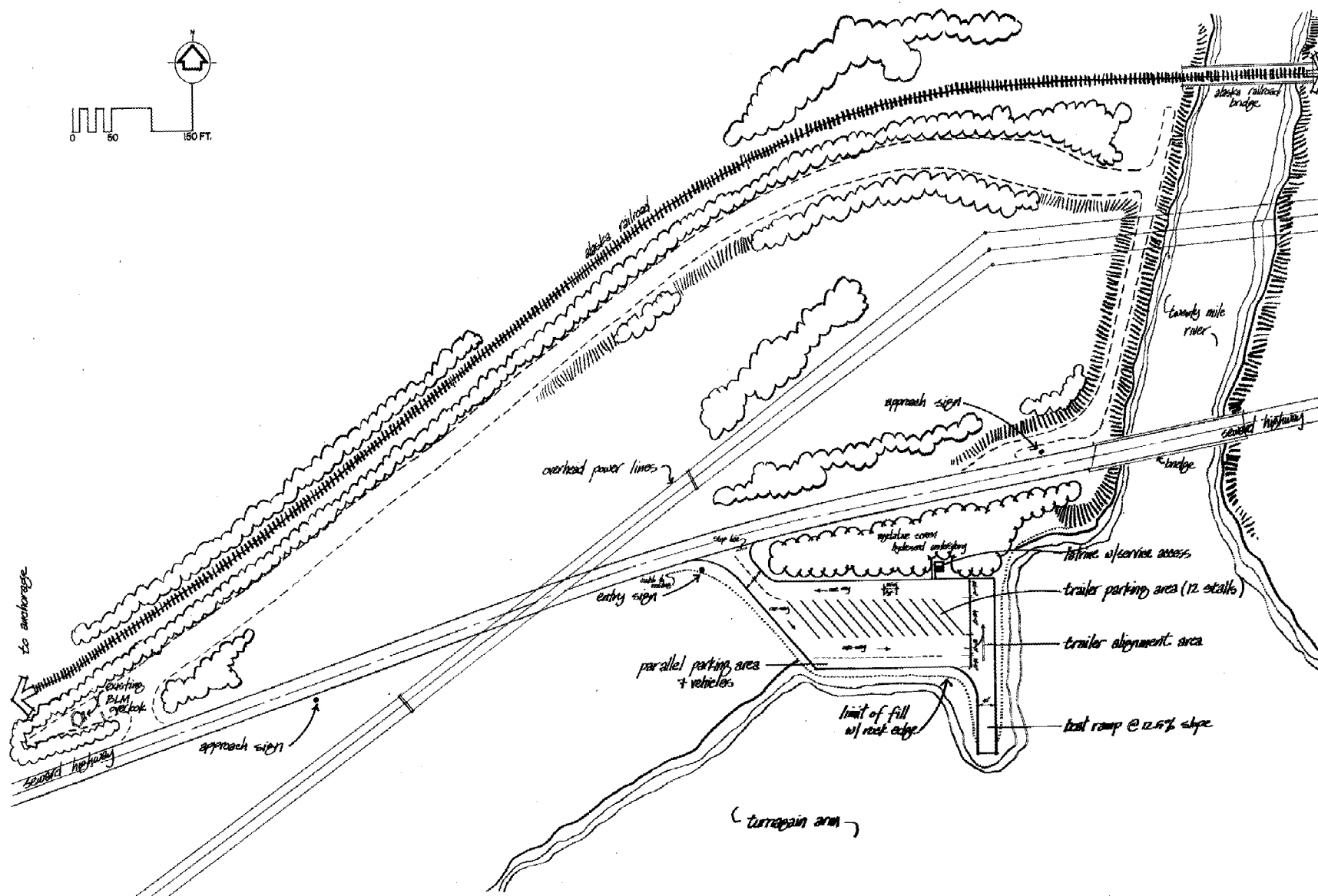
Twenty-Mile River is the route most boaters and bikers use to enter the vast Twenty-Mile River Valley, an undiscovered recreational area.

Access to Twenty-Mile River is from an area which lies between the highway bridge and the Alaska Railroad crossing. This site is unimproved, with a rip-rap dike separating the parking area from the water. The dike represents an obstacle for boaters, and makes improvements to the site impractical due to cost.

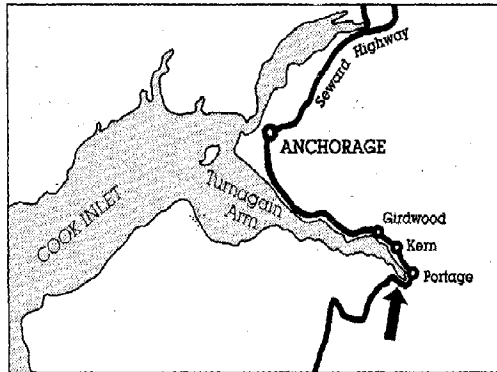
A new access has been selected and is recommended as a site for a boat launch, because it is accessible and does not present any major engineering problems. It is intended to be used until a road is constructed into the river valley, allowing boat access in an area less affected by tidal fluctuations. The boat ramp would provide car and trailer parking and storage and a latrine. The area between the ramp and the road would be screened with indigenous, mature trees and low brush.



**Twenty-Mile Boat Ramp — Section**



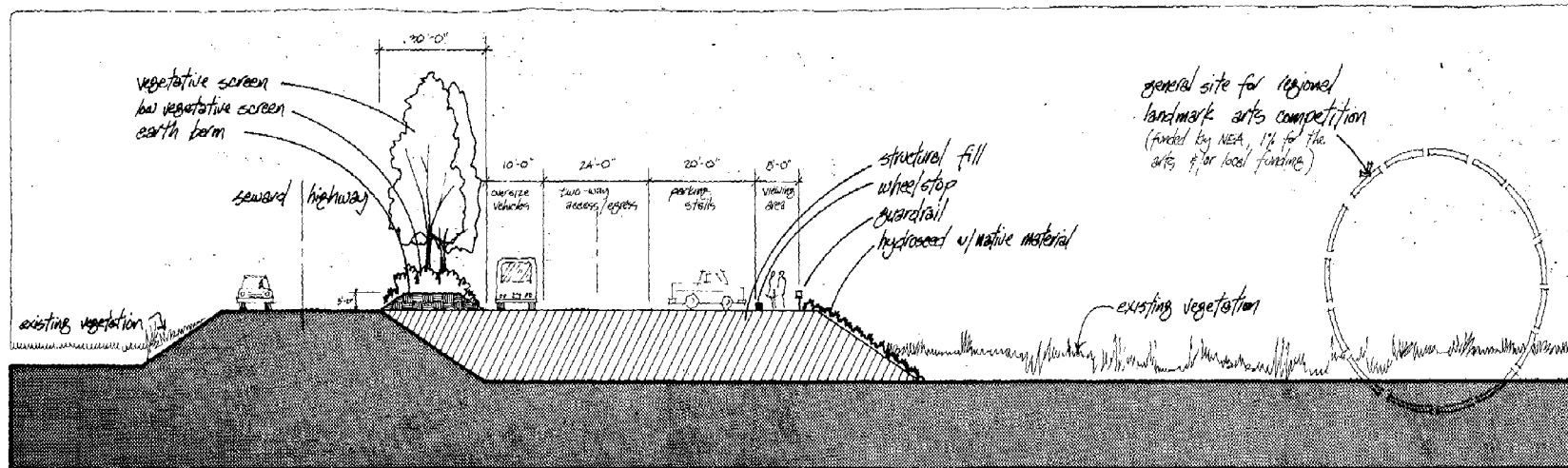
## Plan



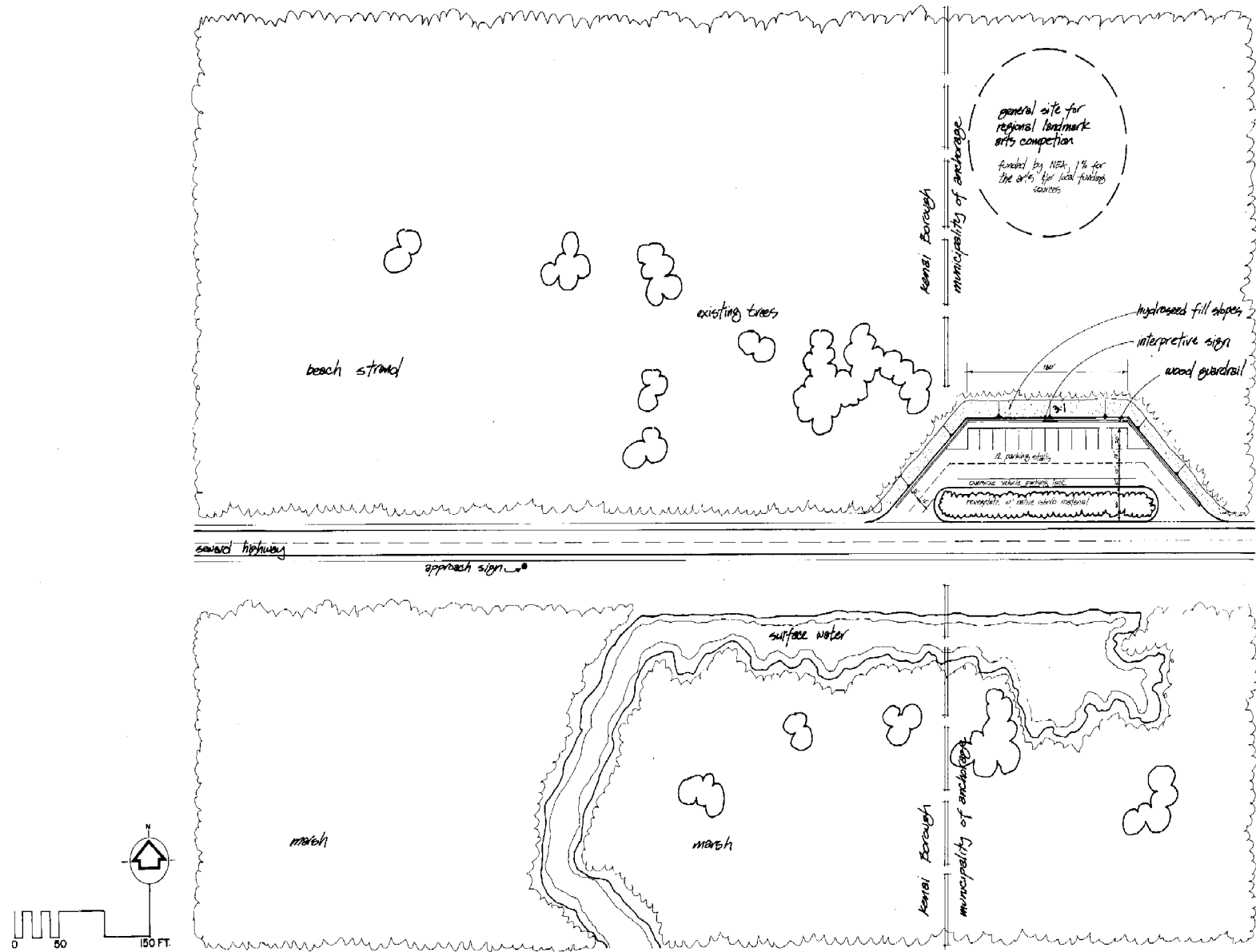
### Entrance to the Municipality

The following typical turnout is recommended for the entrance to the Municipality of Anchorage from the Kenai Peninsula at Ingram Creek and for the points along the corridor where new turnouts are recommended. At Ingram Creek (Tern Wayside), the turnout is intended to serve as a site marking the municipal boundary and should incorporate a unique entrance sign and regional landmark. This site is an excellent place for observing Arctic terns. The pull-off will also provide parking for general viewing and a vegetative screen between the site and general highway traffic.

Tern Wayside establishes a standard for any new turnouts along the corridor and was designed to meet minimum requirements and reflect good engineering and landscape design practices within a scenic corridor.



Typical Wayside — Section



Plan



# Appendix

# Inventory of Scenic and Recreational Sites

1. Site: New Seward Scenic Overlook.  
Location: Mile 0.3, seaside.  
Management:  
Responsibility: Municipality of Anchorage.  
Function: This scenic site provides distant views of Cook Inlet and of the entrance to Turnagain Arm, and middle views of Potter Marsh Wildlife Refuge.  
  
Facilities: Parking lot, interpretive program and viewing deck.  
  
Status: Proposed, Coastal Trail System, Municipality of Anchorage.
2. Site: Rabbit Creek Rifle Range.  
Location: Mile 0.5, seaside.  
Management:  
Responsibility: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.  
Function: This recreation site offers a variety of opportunities to shooting enthusiasts, under the supervision of a rangemaster.  
  
Facilities: A pistol range, .22 caliber rifle range, large-bore rifle range, a skeet range, and parking lot.  
  
Status: Existing with planned improvements.
3. Site: Potter Marsh Waysides.  
Locations: Mile 0.6, 1.0, 1.5, landside.  
Management:  
Responsibility: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.  
Function: These scenic sites offer near views of a waterfowl staging and nesting area and a coastal wetlands habitat.  
  
Facilities: Parking lot and viewing area.  
Status: Existing with planned improvements.
4. Site: Potter Marsh Nature Center.  
Locations: Mile 2.6, landside.  
Management:  
Responsibility: Municipality of Anchorage.  
Function: This recreation and scenic site will provide interpretive information about the wetlands ecosystem, while offering near-views of the waterfowl staging and nesting area.
- Facilities: Nature Center, viewing decks, bike trail and parking lot.  
Status: Proposed, Coastal Trail System, Municipality of Anchorage.
5. Site: Potter Section House.  
Location: Mile 2.9, seaside.  
Management:  
Responsibility: Alaska State Division of Parks.  
Function: This historic site contains a facility that will serve as a Chugach State Park Visitor Center and park ranger office.  
  
Facilities: Section House, viewing platform, restrooms, picnic area.  
Status: Existing, with planned restoration and relocation.
6. Site: Johnson Trailhead at Potter Creek.  
Location: Mile 3.0, landside.  
Management:  
Responsibility: Alaska State Division of Parks.  
Function: This recreation site will establish the northernmost end of Johnson Trail and will provide parking and access to the trail.  
  
Facilities: Trailhead sign, bulletin board, latrine and parking lot.  
Status: Proposed, Chugach State Park Master Plan.
7. Site: McHugh Creek Picnic Area.  
Location: Mile 6.4, landside.  
Management:  
Responsibility: Alaska State Division of Parks.  
Function: This recreation site provides picnicking in a primary scenic and recreation area. Access to both Johnson Trail and McHugh Creek Trail is available from this site.  
  
Facilities: Thirty picnic sites, parking, toilets and trailhead signs.  
Status: Existing.
8. Site: Beluga Point Wayside.  
Location: Mile 8.0, seaside.  
Management:  
Responsibility: Alaska State Division of Parks.  
Function: This archaeological site dates back 6,000 years and will serve as a scenic wayside with interpretive information.  
  
Facilities: Interpretive program, 33-car parking area.  
Status: Proposed, Chugach State Park Master Plan.
9. Site: Johnson Trailhead at Rainbow.  
Location: Mile 9.9, landside.  
Management:  
Responsibility: Alaska State Division of Parks.  
Function: This recreational site will provide for parking and access to the Johnson Trail.  
  
Facilities: Trailhead sign, latrine, bulletin board and parking area.  
Status: Proposed, Chugach State Park Master Plan.
10. Site: Falls Creek Wayside.  
Location: Mile 12.6, landside.  
Management:  
Responsibility: Alaska State Division of Parks.  
Function: This recreational site will provide access to Falls Creek Trail and to the Johnson Trail.  
  
Facilities: Trailhead sign, latrine, bulletin board and a parking area for 10 to 15 cars.  
Status: Proposed, Chugach State Master Plan.

11. Site: The Grotto Wayside.  
Location: Mile 13.2, landside.  
Management  
Responsibility: Alaska State Division of Parks.  
Function: This scenic site will offer near views of interesting vegetation and a waterfall cascading down a rock face.  
Facilities: Small paved parking area.  
Status: Exists, but will be partially destroyed during Seward Highway Improvements. Planned for reconstruction.
12. Site: Indian Community Park.  
Location: Mile 15.2, seaside.  
Management  
Responsibility: Municipality of Anchorage.  
Function: This recreation site provides for organized sports and serves both Indian and Bird Creek.  
Facilities: Baseball field with backstop.  
Status: Existing, with planned improvements.
13. Site: Bird Ridge Trailhead.  
Location: Mile 16.0, landside.  
Management  
Responsibility: Alaska State Division of Parks.  
Function: This recreation site will provide both access and parking for Bird Ridge Trail.  
Facilities: Trailhead sign and parking area for 15 vehicles.  
Status: Existing, but must be relocated due to Seward Highway improvements.
14. Site: Bird Creek Wayside.  
Location: Mile 16.7, landside.  
Management  
Responsibility: Alaska State Division of Parks.  
Function: This wayside will provide a picnic area and parking for people using Bird Creek for fishing and recreation. It will also serve as a trailhead for Bird Creek Trail.  
Facilities: Picnic area, latrine, bulletin board, and parking lot.  
Status: Existing, but must be relocated due to Seward Highway Improvement.
15. Site: Bird Creek Regional Park.  
Location: Two miles north of mile 16.7 along Bird Creek, landside.  
Management  
Responsibility: Alaska State Division of Parks.  
Function: This 2,265-acre regional park is intended to provide camping, picnicking and to meet general recreation needs.  
Facilities: Forty to fifty camping sites, restrooms, water.  
Status: Proposed, Chugach State Park Master Plan and Municipality of Anchorage Park and Recreation Plan.
16. Site: Bird Creek Campground.  
Location: Mile 16.9, seaside.  
Management  
Responsibility: Alaska State Division of Parks.  
Function: This recreational site provides camping and picnicking close to Anchorage, with a variety of unique views of the Turnagain Arm and the local surroundings.  
Facilities: Twenty-four camping sites, 14 picnic sites, toilets, drinking water and a shelter.  
Status: Existing, but proposed exclusively as a picnic site when Bird Creek Regional Park is developed.
17. Site: Bird Point Natural Area.  
Location: Mile 21.7, seaside.  
Management  
Responsibility: Alaska State Division of Parks.  
Function: This recreational and scenic area will provide interpretive and viewing opportunities.  
Facilities: Interpretive program, restrooms, bulletin board, parking.  
Status: Proposed, Chugach State Park Master Plan.
18. Site: Glacier Creek Wetlands.  
Location: Mile 27.9, seaside.  
Management  
Responsibility: Municipality of Anchorage.  
Function: This recreational area will provide interpretive opportunities as well as viewing of the wetlands ecosystem.  
Facilities: Interpretive program.  
Status: Proposed, Municipality of Anchorage Coastal Management Program.
19. Site: BLM Overlook.  
Location: Mile 36.7, landside.  
Management  
Responsibility: Bureau of Land Management.  
Function: This scenic site provides near and middle views of the Twenty Mile wetlands.  
Facilities: Viewing platform, interpretive program, and parking.
20. Site: Placer River Waysides.  
Location: Mile 39.2 and 39.7, landside.  
Management  
Responsibility: U.S. Forest Service.  
Function: These waysides provide access to Placer River.  
Facilities: Parking area.  
Status: Existing.
21. Site: Tern Wayside.  
Location: Mile 40.2, landside.  
Management  
Responsibility: U.S. Forest Service.  
Function: This scenic wayside will provide near views of the wetland at Ingram Creek and distant views of the Chugach Range. It will also serve as a gate to the Municipality of Anchorage.  
Facilities: Parking area.  
Status: Proposed, U.S. Forest Service.



# Model Scenic Corridor Legislation

Legislative proposal to create a state-wide scenic corridor system. The act creating a scenic corridor system proposes the following:

1. *Designates an initial scenic corridor system and provides a mechanism for adding future corridors to that system.*

A corridor is defined as the area with one-half mile of the right of way of such routes or between such route and a ridgetop, whichever is less. The Commissioners of Transportation and Environmental Protection are given the authority to designate additional routes. This authority is intended to cover additional routes that may be constructed as well as possible extension of the system to those routes designated in the report as Locally Significant Scenic Roads.

2. *Provides a comprehensive program for the preservation of the scenic resources of the designated corridors.*

Simply calling a route scenic does not in itself protect it. In fact, it might actually increase development pressure along the route and thereby contribute to the destruction of its scenic quality. The comprehensive preservation program recommended seeks to balance the responsibility of the state to take decisive action to protect its unique scenic and historical resources against the desire to maintain a strong local role in decision-making on land-use issues. Toward this end the legislation:

*Joint Study into the Creation, Establishment and Designation of a Scenic Corridor System, Connecticut Department of Transportation and Department of Environmental Protection, January, 1972.*

- a. *Prohibits, within the scenic corridor, uses of land clearly incompatible with the preservation of scenic values.*

These uses are billboards and junk yards.

- b. *Permits the Commissioner of Environmental Protection to review proposed commercial and industrial developments within the scenic corridor to ensure they will not have a substantial adverse effect on the scenic and environmental qualities of the corridor.*

Most damage to scenic and environmental values is done by unregulated or poorly regulated commercial and industrial establishments such as filling stations, motels, and restaurants. Allowing the review of proposed additional establishments of this type will ensure that they are sited and designed to do the least possible damage to scenic values. It is specifically provided that no project disapproval by a local planning or zoning commission may be approved by the Commissioner, thus retaining primary authority at the local level.

- c. *Requires local planning or zoning commission to develop regulations to protect the corridors from residential developments which would have a substantial adverse effect on scenic or environmental values.*

The Commissioner of Environmental Protection is directed to issue guidelines to such local commissions to guide their efforts and to review the resulting regulations to ensure that they will effectively protect such corridors. Here again, the primary responsibility for protecting the system is at the local level. Only if local regulating is ineffective will the state step in to protect the state-wide interest in preservation of the unique values along these routes.

## An Act Establishing a Scenic Environmental Corridor System

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

*Section 1.* The general assembly finds that the growing population, expanding economy and changing technology of the state have had a profound impact on the scenic, historic and environmental resources of the state which are now recognized as finite and precious. These resources include, but are not limited to, upland pastoral landscapes, upland wooded landscapes, deep river valleys, traprock ridge zones, and pastoral river valleys. These scenic, historic and environmental resources, especially along local, state and interstate highways, have contributed greatly to the state's economic and spiritual development by encouraging Connecticut residents to remain here, by attracting to the state permanent and part-time residents, tourists, commerce, industry, and cultural and educational facilities. These resources have also contributed to maintaining and increasing the general level of property values in the community. Therefore, the general assembly hereby declares that the policy of the state of Connecticut is to conserve, preserve, improve and protect its scenic and environmental resources in order to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the people of the state.

*Section 2.* For purposes of this Act the terms listed below shall have the following meanings:

- (a) "scenic, historical or environmental resources" shall mean upland pastoral landscapes, upland wooded landscapes, deep river valleys, traprock ridge zones, and pastoral river valleys.
- (b) "billboard" shall mean any advertising sign except (1) signs advertising the primary activity conducted on the premises on which they are located; (2) signs advertising the sale or lease of the property on which they are located.

- (c) "junk yard" shall mean any land or building which is used for the storage, collection, salvage, processing or conversion of used or discarded material. The use of land for open storage of two (2) or more motor vehicles no longer in safe operating condition shall be deemed a junk yard.
- (d) "commercial or industrial establishment" shall mean any facility used for the production, sale or exchange of any goods or service including but not limited to gasoline stations, restaurants, motels, factories, quarries, sand and gravel pits and automotive sales lots.
- (e) "residential development" shall mean any alteration of the land for residential purposes including but not limited to dwelling houses, trailer parks or campsites.

Section 3. There is hereby established a scenic and environmental corridor system. Such a "scenic corridor" shall mean all lands and waters within one-half mile of the right of way of highways designated, under Section 4, as scenic highways or between such highways and a ridgetop, whichever is less.

#### Section 4.

- (a) The following highways are hereby found to have scarce scenic, historic and environmental values contributing to the social and economic well being of the citizens of the state of Connecticut and are hereby designated as scenic highways.

- (b) The Commissioners of Transportation and Environmental Protection are hereby given the authority to designate additional highways or sections of highways as scenic highways upon a joint finding that the corridor through which such highways pass consists of scarce scenic, historic or environmental resources that contribute to the economic and social well being of the people of Connecticut.

Section 5. No person or firm shall erect or maintain any billboard or junk yard within any scenic corridor established under this Act. This shall not apply to billboards or junk yards existing at the effective date of this Act.

Section 6. No person or firm shall erect, modify or maintain any commercial or industrial establishments within any scenic corridor established under this Act without obtaining a permit from the Commissioner of Environmental Protection. In deciding whether, or under what conditions, to issue a permit under this section, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection shall take into account the following factors:

- (a) The impact of the establishment on the scenic and environmental values of the corridor and the state;
- (b) Methods of minimizing any adverse impact of the establishment including but not limited to setbacks, screening and improved landscape and architectural design;
- (c) The hardship imposed on the landowner in light of alternative uses which might be made of the land;
- (d) The public need for the establishment in relation to existing or potential establishments of a similar nature.

The Commissioner of Environmental Protection may exempt certain classes of industrial or commercial establishments from the requirements of this section upon a finding that they are unlikely to have an adverse impact on the scenic, historic and environmental resources of the corridor.

In no case shall a permit be issued under this section to permit a use prohibited by local law or regulation.

This shall not apply to any establishment existing at the effective date of this Act except in the case of substantial modification of that establishment.

Section 7. The Commissioner of Environmental Protection is hereby directed to develop and issue guidelines to municipalities requesting them to develop or amend zoning or other regulations which respect to residential developments within scenic corridors so that such developments will have the least feasible adverse impact on the scenic, historic and environmental values of the corridor. In the event a municipality does not establish such regulations by December 31, 1972, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection is hereby directed and authorized to adopt regulations reasonably designed to preserve and protect the scenic and environmental values of the corridors from residential developments.

Section 8. Violations of the provisions of this Act or of regulations adopted under this Act shall be punishable by fines not to exceed \$500 per day.

Section 9. The Commissioner of Environmental Protection may bring actions to enjoin violation of any provision of this Act or any regulations issued under this Act.

## Bibliography

Alaska Division of Parks, Department of Natural Resources. 1980. *Chugach State Park Master Plan*.

Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. 1975. *Visual Impact Engineering—Visual Assessment Principles, Procedures and Application*.

Burns, Tony. 1980. *Anchorage Coastal Management Plan, Management Program*. Municipality of Anchorage, Planning Department.

Carberry, Michael E. 1979. *Patterns of the Past: Anchorage's Heritage Resources*. Anchorage: Historic Landmarks Preservation Committee.

Connecticut Department of Transportation and Department of Environmental Protection. 1972. *Joint Study into the Creation, Establishment and Designation of a State-Wide Scenic Highway System*.

Jones & Jones, et. al. 1977. *Esthetics and Visual Resource Management for Highways*. Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. Seattle.

Jones & Jones, et. al. 1974. "Highway Reservations and Land-Use Control Under Police Power." *Highway Research Record*, 8, 53-59.

Municipality of Anchorage—Historic Landmarks Preservation Committee. 1980. *Preservation and Reuse of the Potter Section House*. Anchorage.

Municipality of Anchorage—Planning Department. 1979. *Turnagain Arm—Comprehensive Plan*. Anchorage.

Smith, Clyn. 1971. "Easement to Preserve Open Space Land." *Ecology Law Quarterly*, Vol. 1, 728-748.

State of Washington, Department of Highways. 1976. *Highway Advertising Control—Scenic Vistas Act of 1971*. Bulletin M22-95 (HR).

U.S. Department of the Interior—Bureau of Land Management. 1975. *System for Visual Resource Management*. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Agriculture—Forest Service. 1974. *National Forest Landscape Management—Roads*. Handbook No. 483. Washington, D.C.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1974. *National Forest Landscape Management—The Visual Management System*. Handbook No. 462.

U.S. Department of Highways. 1972. *Policy on Roadside Development and Highway Beautification*. Washington, D.C.

Williams, Norman Jr. 1968. "Legal Techniques to Protect and Promote Aesthetics Along Transportation Corridors." *Buffalo Law Review*. 701-716.



**Kramer, Chin & Mayo, Inc.**

Consulting Engineers, Architects, Applied Scientists  
1113 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 101  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503 Phone (907) 276-3303

NMMA COASTAL SERVICES CENTER LIBRARY  
  
3 6668 14103 7954

